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The American punitive expedition into Mexico, 1916-1917

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CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNING

I. THE REVOLUTIONARY BACKGROUND

In 1910 the Mexican Revolution began. By May 1911 Francisco Madero had replaced Diaz, who had ruled for almost thirty-five years.[1] Madero was a visionary who was incapable of carrying out the reforms he had promised. Insurrections under various leaders became dangerous to American life and property. Taft and his ambassador, Henry Lane Wilson, made repeated demands on Madero to protect American rights. But Madero, now caught on the horns of the Yankeephobia dilemma, did not have the strength to defy either the insurrectionists or the American government, and no matter what he did, one faction or another was bound to say that he had given in to the Americans.[2]

But Madero did not have the opportunity to continue his efforts to solve his problems. He was arrested on February 18, 1913, by General Victoriano Huerta, his

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[1] "Current Events," Literary Digest, May 27, 1911, June 10, 1911.

[2] J. Fred Rippy, The United States and Mexico (New York: F. S. Crofts and Company, 1931), p. 333.

commander-in-chief, and imprisoned in the National Palace. Four days later he was assassinated, apparently with the connivance of Huerta, although the latter disclaimed all responsibility.

Ambassador Wilson's actions in regard to the Madero government, his hasty acceptance of Huerta's version of Madero's death, and his quick urging that Washington recognize Huerta reflect no credit on the United States. The Taft administration did not hasten the recognition of Huerta despite Wilson's recommendations. It seems possible that Taft purposely did not solve this problem so that it could be left for the new President to face as he came into office in March of 1913.[3]

Woodrow Wilson was inaugurated March 4, 1913. Within a week he made a statement in regard to Latin American relations generally, and pointed obviously at Mexico and the Huerta regime.[4]

> One of the chief objects of my administration will be to cultivate the friendship and deserve the confidence of our sister republics of Central and South America, and to promote in every proper and honorable way the interests which are common to the people of the two

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[3] Rippy, op. cit., pp. 345-47.

[4] Ray Stannard Baker, Woodrow Wilson Life and Letters (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946), Vol. 3, p. 66.

> continents. I earnestly desire the most cordial understanding and cooperation between the peoples and leaders of America.[5]

With this statement of policy he began what became known as "watchful waiting."[6] However, the watchfulness had the strong moral tinge which characterized so much of Wilson's action and was completely different from Taft's view of the problem which had been solely a legal one.[7] The waiting was not to be precisely that either. Wilson consistently disavowed intervention, yet he practiced it under a variety of forms without ever using force directly to establish the stable and constitutional government which he wanted to see in Mexico.

But still no stability was in sight. The American action in seizing Vera Cruz had angered all Mexicans, and no one wanted to appear as backed by the United States. Carranza came to power in August, 1914, and attempted to establish order. His most formidable enemy was Pancho Villa, who held almost complete power in the north. Obregon, Carranza's chief general, defeated Villa in April,

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[5] Ibid., p. 65.

[6] Edgar E. Robinson and Victor J. West, The Foreign Policy of Woodrow Wilson 1913-1917 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1918), p. 205. Apparently the first use of the term was in Wilson's Annual Message to Congress, December 2, 1913.

[7] Rippy, op. cit., p. 349.

1915, and peace seemed likely except for small outbreaks here and there.[8]

Wilson had watched this settlement with a fairly pleased eye, but he began to be impatient in the fall of 1915 for a more orderly situation. He called a conference of Latin American nations. This conference invited the leaders of what factions were left to come and present their views. Some came and some did not. The conference finally decided that Carranza should be recognized, and in October, 1915, the United States extended de facto recognition. This was the first government the United States had recognized in Mexico since February 1913. In addition to recognition Wilson arranged the arms embargo so that it would apply only to arms intended for Carranza's enemies and not to arms purchased for his own forces.[9]

> Having thus exalted Carranza's international status by securing for him the recognition of the leading powers of Europe and America and having instructed his subordinates to enforce the arms embargo so as to favor the Carranzistas, Wilson settled down once more to watch and wait. Mexico's 'fortunes are in her own hands,' he declared in his annual message of 1915. 'We . . . now hopefully await the rebirth of the troubled Republic. . . . We will aid and befriend Mexico, but we will not coerce her.' One is inclined to inquire what portion of the Mexican nation was included under the

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[8] Mary W. Williams, The People and Politics of Latin America (New York: Ginn and Company, 1945), p. 492.

[9] Rippy, op. cit., p. 354.

term "Mexico." Certainly somebody had been coerced and was being coerced by the Wilson policy.[10]

That someone was Pancho Villa. At least, he thought he was being coerced. He had had some encouragement in the previous fall for thinking that he might be recognized as the head of the Mexican state.[11] The recognition of Carranza, his chief enemy, had angered him greatly. In a series of incidents he antagonized the United States. Many Americans felt they were in danger from his actions along the border. Villa troops fired on American soldiers at Nogales, Arizona, on November 26, and finally Pershing authorized the returning of fire across the border. On January 10, 1916, the news of the Santa Ysabel massacre startled the nation. The State Department strongly urged Carranza to deal effectively and at once with Villa, but nothing was done except to keep Villa on the border with results in March that were unexpected but not entirely unpredictable.[12]

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[10] Loc. cit.

[11] J. H. Plenn, Mexico Marches (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1939), p. 58.

[12] Baker, op. cit., Vol. 5, pp. 66-68.

II. THE COLUMBUS RAID

Columbus, New Mexico is a quiet little town on the Southern Pacific Railroad three miles from the Mexican border. In March, 1916, it was the station of the 13th United States Cavalry Regiment, which was engaged in patrolling the border. Columbus was not a very exciting or interesting town. Soldiers did not care to be stationed there. One officer reported on his life in Columbus as follows:

> Three exciting events took place during my sojourn at Columbus. First the "Golden States" passed through every day going east. This occurrence was attended regularly by all those present for duty. Second, the "Golden States" passed through every day going west. This was attended also by all those present for duty. Third, Villa raided the camp and town on March 9, 1916. This likewise was attended by all those present for duty.[13]

At 4:30 A.M., the morning of March 9, 1916, Columbus awoke from its somnolence, both literal and figurative, and became a battlefield, and, for a day, the center of international attention.[14] A band of Mexicans estimated that anywhere from three hundred to fifteen hundred attacked Columbus, shooting, burning, and shouting "Viva Villa."

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[13] Frank Tompkins, Chasing Villa (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Military Service Publishing Company, 1934), p. 51.

[14] New York Times, March 10, 1916.

The first person to see them was Private Fred Griffin, who was on guard Post No. 3 around the regimental headquarters. He challenged the Mexicans as they crossed the road into the camp, and receiving no answer but a bullet in the stomach, fired back and killed three Mexicans before he died.[15] The shots roused Lieutenant James P. Castleman, who was Officer of the Day. He rushed from the O. D. shack, bumped into a Mexican and killed him on the spot. Becoming aware of what was happening, he ran to the barracks area where he found his troop ready to fight. Leading them in a series of short stands toward the town, he got them into a commanding position across the main street of the town in front of the bank. Because the darkness prevented effective fighting, they managed only to keep the Mexicans from attacking the west end of the town. In the darkness and confusion none of the troops were sure who or what they were firing on.[16]

While Lieutenant Castleman's force was in the town itself waiting for light to help them, Lieutenant John P. Lucas, commander of the Machine Gun Troop had gotten to

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15 Tompkins, op. cit., p. 49.

16 Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 49, 50.

his men,[17] although in his rush to escape the Mexicans attacking his house he had forgotten his shoes and went through the entire engagement with bare feet. He turned out his troop and placed the machine guns in strategic positions to protect the camp and the south side of the town.[18]

The Mexicans attacked the camp, which was on the south side of the town, from the east and the west, and attacked the town from the west. Lieutenant Castleman, by taking his troop into the town, protected much of the business section in the northeast quarter from being destroyed. Lieutenant Lucas' action drove the invaders from the camp itself. After running riot in the rest of the town for approximately an hour, the Mexicans were foolish enough to set fire to one of the larger buildings, the Commercial Hotel. The light from this fire made the Mexicans excellent targets, and the two lieutenants caught them in a raking cross-fire. At 6:30 the Mexican bugler

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[17] Other officers in Columbus were prevented from approaching the camp and directing their men because living quarters in the town were scattered around, and the officers could not get through the Mexicans to the camp. Some of the officers, as was natural, were most concerned with protecting their wives and children, who were, in this case, as likely to be shot as the soldiers.

[18] Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 51 ff.

sounded retreat, and the forces withdrew toward the south in poor order, which soon turned to rout.[19]

While in the town the Mexicans had killed seven American soldiers in the battle and nine civilians, most of them in cold blood. Several of the main buildings were looted and then burned. The central squares of the town presented a desolate appearance when the sun finally made its appearance.[20]

As the battle ended, the officers of the regiment had gathered one by one on the hill on the southwest quarter of town. From here Colonel Slocum, the Regimental Commander, directed that a force follow the retreating Mexicans. Major Frank Tompkins suggested the chase, and he was placed in command of it. Taking one troop of cavalry, he followed southward. They crossed the border and attacked the retreating Mexicans, who were holding a hill some three hundred yards south of the border fence. They took the hill, killing thirty-two Mexicans. Major Tompkins sent back to Columbus, three miles, to get Colonel Slocum's permission to continue the chase into Mexican territory, which was in violation of War Department orders. Told to

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[19] Tompkins, op. cit., p. 53, New York Times, March 10, 1916.

[20] New York Times, March 10, 1916.

proceed with his own judgment, he led his force, now augmented by another troop, on into Mexico. They went twelve miles into Mexico and had two small skirmishes with the raiders. Finally they turned back, before exhausting their horses, and returned to Columbus. They counted between seventy-five and one hundred dead Mexicans as a result of the chase.[21]

The raid on Columbus, New Mexico, had been directed by one Pancho Villa, sometime bandit, sometime General of the Army of the Republic of Mexico. The raid was the end result of years of unrest in Mexico, and it brought the United States and Mexico to the brink of war. It is the purpose of this thesis to discuss the events leading up to the raid and the Punitive Expedition sent by the United States into Mexico in search of Villa.

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[21] Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 55 ff.

CHAPTER II

PANCHO VILLA

Pancho Villa, the immediate cause of the American Punitive Expedition, was in many ways a remarkable man. Born of humble peon parents, he rose to a place of prominence and, at times, a place of respect, not only in the eyes of his countrymen, but in the eyes of people all over the world. He was many things to many people--avenger of his family honor in a dramatically Latin style, bandit chief extraordinary, officer in the revolutionary armies in Mexico, prosperous merchant, Dictator of the State of Chihuahua, idol of the American temperance movement, and a remorseless murderer who almost succeeded in causing the loss of the Mexican independence, which he apparently treasured so highly.

I. EARLY LIFE

Villa was born June 5, 1878, on the Hacienda Rio Grande in the State of Durango. He was the son of peasant laborers, who christened him Doroteo Arango. He was the oldest child, and, when his father died in 1888, he went to work on the rancho to support his family.

His life is so wrapped in legend that it is difficult to know exactly what happened to Villa during his

early life. Apparently he was an energetic lad. He got a job, in addition to his ranch work, driving a six mule team on the wagon road from Guenacevi to Chihuahua. Although peons were not at this time legally attached to their haciendas, the masters quite often considered them to be, and Arango's departure was not taken kindly. He was apparently framed on a cattle stealing charge by the ranch owner, who was a Spaniard, and was sent to prison for three months. Upon his release from jail, he vowed vengeance against all Spaniards and all Diaz officials.

After his release from jail, he took a job in Chihuahua City as a milkman and seemed on the way to becoming a normal Mexican youth, who had had difficulties with the law. This, however, was not to be. He visited his home at intervals, and on one visit discovered that his sister was in difficulties. His mother bluntly told him that the girl had been seduced by the son of the ranch owner. This was too much for our fiery young hero, and he immediately rode out to find the man who "had done his sister wrong." He shot the man with little explanation and thereupon became an outlaw with no hope of reconciliation to society. An ordinary murder would have been bad enough, but to shoot the son of a wealthy landowner immediately

put a price on his head. Doroteo hit the road for the hills.[1]

II. BANDITRY

Here the young man was picked up by the scouts of the most famous of the Mexican bandits of the time, Ignacio Parra. Almost as afraid of the bandits as he would have been of the police, he told them that his name was Pancho Villa, a name he remembered from hearing talk of old time bandits while he was in jail.

Apparently impressing them with what appeared to be bravado, Villa was taken in as a member of the band when he explained why it was necessary for him to be an outlaw. Legend says that within a week of joining the band he became its leader, when Parra was killed in an attack on a stage-coach carrying a payroll. Considering the type of men who must have constituted this band of outlaws, that idea seems a little unlikely. At any rate, Villa was for the next fifteen years a bandit, ranging through Chihuahua, Durango, and Sonora, living off the land and making a remarkable success of it.[2]

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[1] Ernest Otto Schuster, Pancho Villa's Shadow (New York: Exposition Press, 1947), pp. 3-19.

[2] Schuster, op. cit., pp. 20-51.

III. REVOLUTIONARY OFFICER

Late in 1910 Villa heard about Madero's revolutionary movement. He offered the services of his band to the Governor of Chihuahua, Don Abran Gonzales. He was accepted, and on December 10, 1910, he became a Captain in the revolutionary army. He and his band were placed under the command of General Orozco at Casas Grandes.[3] His company he named Los Dorados, The Golden Ones. Under General Orozco the Villa troop fought in several battles. By March, 1911, President Diaz was attempting to settle with Madero. During the negotiations Madero promoted several of his officers. So, on April 28, 1911, Villa became a Colonel in the revolutionary army.[4]

In June, 1911, he was relieved from active duty. He returned to his wife in Chihuahua City and became an honored and respected citizen. He opened a butcher shop, which seems somehow appropriate. Because of his fame, he soon built a good business for himself. He became restless, however, and in May of 1912 he again offered his military services.[5]

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[3] Ibid., pp. 52-54.

[4] Schuster, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

[5] Ibid., pp. 90-93.

In 1912 Villa was placed under the command of General Huerta, who had changed his allegiance from Diaz to Madero. Villa's bandit tendencies got the best of him, and he got into difficulty with Huerta concerning a horse which seemed to belong to someone besides Villa. He narrowly escaped the death penalty because he disobeyed Huerta's orders in the course of the investigation, but his sentence was commuted to imprisonment in Mexico City. He escaped from jail and left the country. He resided secretly in El Paso until February, 1913. The murder of Madero drew him back into the maelstrom of Mexican revolution and politics.[6]

IV. REVOLUTIONARY LEADER

Villa gathered a small army and set out to take the State of Chihuahua from the Federal forces, who were now under Huerta. It is difficult to tell whether Villa's motives were actually revolutionary in any good sense or only vengeful. Because of the disagreement with Huerta the year before, and because Huerta had once been a Diaz officer, Villa hated him intensely.

At the same time that Villa was collecting forces in Chihuahua, Carranza was organizing an army in Coahuila. He

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[6] Ibid., pp. 94-107.

named himself First Chief of the Constitutionalist Army and asked Villa to join forces with him. Villa preferred to operate by himself. Even so, Carranza promoted him in May, 1913, to General, and Villa was gracious enough to accept the rank and title.[7]

By December 13, 1913, Villa was in complete command of Chihuahua. He had taken Juarez and Chihuahua City and driven all of the Federal troops out of the state. He set himself up as a typical Latin strong man. He ran things all his own way. He did things for the little people and took away from the rich. He released prisoners and imprisoned his own enemies. He began buying large stocks of military supplies from sources in the United States.[8]

Carranza and Villa, with the help of the American force which had taken Vera Cruz, finally succeeded in driving out Huerta. He left Mexico in July, 1914.[9] A provisional president was named, and once again the leaders of the Mexican armies split. Villa and Zapata supported President Eulalio Gutierrez, and Carranza and Obregon refused to accept him.[10]

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[7] Schuster, op. cit., pp. 115-117.

[8] Ibid., pp. 129-137.

[9] Schuster, op. cit., p. 152.

[10] Ibid., p. 154.

All the factions attempted to gain American recognition, and for a time it seemed that the Villa supported regime would prove acceptable to Washington. In April, 1915, the Villa and Carranza forces fought at Celaya. Villa was defeated, and this was the beginning of the end of his power. His generals deserted him one by one. On October 19, 1915, Villa learned that the United States had recognized the Carranza government. He turned against Americans, and in his uncontrollable anger he swore to kill all the Americans in Mexico. In December Villa's general in Juarez surrendered that city to the Carranza government, and Villa was lost. He hid in the mountains in Sonora, once again a bandit who was forced to live off the country. He had with him many of the original band which had gone into the revolution in 1910. Not much is known of these men except that they must have been in many respects like Villa.[11]

At this time the papers in the United States finally decided that the Mexican situation would become stabilized. With a recognized government established, and the generals finally fought out against each other, it seemed that Mexico would finally find its way out of the revolutionary morass

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[11] Ibid., pp. 170-181.

into which it had sunk. The Literary Digest assembled various newspaper reviews of the course of Villa's career. The New York Evening Post was the most indulgent, and saw in Villa "the raw capacities of the Mexican people for good and evil."

They called him one of the most picturesque characters of the contemporary stage.

> He was the peon whom the policies of Diaz denied the opportunity for developing into a contented and prosperous citizen of his country. It has been a romantic career. Yuan Shi Kai, who has won an emperor's crown, set out from the high position of Governor of one of China's greatest provinces, and has traversed the interval in fifteen years. If we measure the distance from Villa's starting-point to where he stood at the height of his power, the record is no less impressive. Nor does the picturesque record suffer from the fact that the outlaw rose to fame on the crest of a great cause, that he will go down in history as one of the avengers of Francisco Madero and a vindicator of the cause of Mexican democracy.[12]

V. SANTA YSABEL AND COLUMBUS

But that was not to be the way in which Pancho Villa went down in history. His good works, if they may be called that, would be completely overshadowed by his actions in the next few months. The first of these deeds to arouse the anger of the civilized world was the Santa Ysabel massacre.

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[12] "Villa's 'First Aid' to Washington," Literary Digest, 52:5, January 1, 1916.

Villa was not directly involved in this, but it was directed by Pablo López, his second in command. In early January the executives of the Cusihuirachic Mining Company were returning to the town of that name to resume operations there. At Santa Ysabel on the morning of January 9, 1916, they were taken off the train, and eighteen Americans were murdered. Lopez afterward stated that Villa had ordered the murder, but this was never proved. Villa always denied it.[13]

Exactly two months later Villa led the raid on Columbus, New Mexico. The rest of this thesis deals with the next few months of Villa's life.

VI. LAST TRY AND THE END

After the Punitive Expedition left Mexico in 1917, Villa again attempted to continue his battle with Carranza. He recruited again, but he never managed to collect more than two thousand troops. He had only one of his trusted officers left, General Felipe Angeles. They roamed about Chihuahua from 1917 to 1919 capturing small forces of Federals and confiscating their arms to add to their own stores. In June, 1919, they attempted to capture Juarez,

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[13] Schuster, op. cit., pp. 199-203.

but they were fired on by American troops, who had been sent across the border to augment the small Federal force there. Villa immediately retreated. He and Angeles then determined to take the city of Chihuahua so that they could at last get a good stock of ammunition. Angeles was captured and executed, however, before the city was reached. Villa was at last alone. Calles and Obregon then overthrew the Carranza government and installed Adolfo de la Huerta as president. This finished Villa's political ideals. Apparently he felt that there was nothing more that he could do to try to carry out Madero's revolutionary goals.[14]

Through old friends, who were acceptable to the new government, Villa asked for terms so that he might retire from fighting and live quietly in Mexico. Because he was familiar with no other country but the United States, and because he could obviously not go there as an exile, he sought some sort of an arrangement with the government. The terms finally agreed upon were as follows:

> . . . that he was to receive the Hacienda del Canutillo on which he was to reside and farm. He would be furnished with all the modern farming implements, tractors, plows, cultivators, seeds of all kinds, etc., and also be allowed to retain a reasonably sized bodyguard. Each of his officers were to receive an average of one thousand pesos, according to their rank;

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[14] Schuster, op. cit., pp. 255-265.

privates also were to receive a cash amount and a small tract of land suitable for farming.[15]

Villa retired to his ranch, which was located just outside of Parral in his old bandit territory. Here he lived with his family the peaceful life of a wealthy Mexican rancher for three years. On July 20, 1923, he was assassinated in Parral by a Mexican Congressman, Salas Barrazas, who thought that he was rendering a service to the Republic by destroying a man who had brought so much bloodshed and sorrow to Mexico. Thus by violence died a man who had lived most of his life with violence and terror as his constant companions.[16]

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[15] Ibid., p. 271.

[16] Schuster, op. cit., pp. 307-312.

CHAPTER III

THE AMERICAN COMMAND

The men who led the Punitive Expedition, while not being exactly a cross section of the Regular Army, were, in a sense, very representative of American officers who served during the period between the Civil War and the first World War.

I. GENERAL PERSHING

The outstanding officer of the expedition was, of course, John Joseph Pershing. Although his fame was to increase immeasurably in the next three years, Pershing was not without note at the time he took command of the American forces in pursuit of Villa.

Pershing's career before 1916 is worthy of some review. He was born on September 13, 1860, in Linn County, Missouri, the son of John and Ann Pershing. After a boyhood without noticeable incident, he began to teach grade school to earn enough money to attend the Kirksville Normal School in Missouri, which he did in 1880. In 1881 he had an opportunity to compete for entrance into the United States Military Academy. He was appointed in 1882 and graduated in 1886. He was commissioned a Second Lieutenant

in the 6th Cavalry on July 1, 1886. He served first in the Apache Indian Campaign in Arizona and New Mexico in 1886. Chasing Geronimo gave him an acquaintance with guerilla methods in the arid southwest, which was to stand him in good stead thirty years later when he chased Villa over similar territory. His next campaigning was in the Dakotas in 1890 and 1891 against the Sioux. He was made commander of the Sioux Indian Scouts and held that position until August, 1891.

Pershing was then appointed Military Instructor at the University of Nebraska. In October of 1892 he was promoted to the rank of 1st Lieutenant. While at the University he took advantage of his situation to take work in the law school and earned his L.L.B. in 1893. In 1895 he was returned to field assignments for two years. In 1897 he was made an instructor in tactics at West Point.

In 1898 the Spanish American War broke out, and Pershing was recalled to the 10th Cavalry, in which he held his commission, and served with distinction in the Santiago campaign in Cuba. He then organized the Bureau of Insular Affairs, and was its chief until August 16, 1899, at which time he was transferred to the Philippine Islands.

Here he was so successful that he was promoted to Captain in 1901. His exploits against the Moros were so

well conceived and executed that he caught the eye of Theodore Roosevelt, a man who was quite fond of daring military feats. For his services in the Philippines Roosevelt saw fit to promote Pershing in one fell swoop from Captain to Brigadier General over the heads of 862 officers who ranked Pershing in grade and seniority. Such a promotion would be remarkable even in war, but for a peace-time army such a promotion was completely unheard of, and had Pershing never done another thing in his military career, his fame would be secure on that promotion alone.

In 1905, before the promotion, Pershing had served as Military Attache in Tokyo. While stationed there he was invited by the Japanese to observe their armies in operation against the Russians in Manchuria.

After his service in Japan, Pershing returned to the Philippines as a Brigadier General, and finally defeated the Moros completely at Bagsak on June 12, 1913.

He was returned to the States and for a time was Commanding Officer of the 8th Brigade at the Presidio of San Francisco. This post held unhappy memories for Pershing. It was here in August of 1915, after the General had been transferred to Fort Bliss, that a fire destroyed the quarters in which his wife and family were living. Pershing's wife and three daughters were burned to death in

the fire, and only his son, Warren, survived.[1]

The story is told that after Pershing's arrival at Fort Bliss in April, 1914, he inspected his new command and announced, "I am ready to take the field on five minutes notice."[2] This may have sounded somewhat bellicose, but the state of affairs on the border during the previous years had made that kind of preparedness a necessity. Later in 1914 he was also placed in command of the El Paso patrol district.[3]

On March 10, 1916, the day after the Columbus raid, President Wilson named Pershing as the commander of the Punitive Expedition, and he went to Columbus to assume command and to organize his troops.[4] This choice of commanders was apparently dictated by two things. First of all, Pershing was the closest general officer to the scene of the projected action. Besides this, Pershing had an already established reputation for being good at this sort

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[1] "Obituary, John Joseph Pershing," 1949 Book of the Year (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica Corporation, 1949), p. 533. Who Was Who In America, Volume 2 (Chicago: A. N. Marquis Company, 1950), p. 1938.

[2] C. H. Farrell, Incidents in the Life of General John J. Pershing (Chicago: Rand, McNally and Company, 1918), p. 93.

[3] Who Was Who In America, Volume 2, p. 1938.

[4] Tompkins, op. cit., p. 71.

of thing and for having had much experience at it--with the Indians; before that, across the border after Geronimo, and in the Philippines.

II. OTHER OFFICERS

The other important leaders of the expedition were mostly cavalry officers also. Almost to a man they had had experience similar to General Pershing's. They had fought in the Indian Campaigns against the Apache and against the Sioux. They had all had some part in the Spanish War in Cuba, and most of them had done a tour of duty in the Philippines.

Here follows what amounts to a mere listing of the officers concerned, and the outfits with which they were connected:

Colonel George A. Dodd, 2nd Cavalry Brigade.

Colonel Dodd served in Chicago during the Pullman strike and was decorated for gallantry in action at Santiago. He was promoted to Brigadier General, and retired for age in July, 1916, during the course of the Punitive Expedition.[5]

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[5] Who Was Who In America, Volume 1 (New York: A. N. Marquis Company, 1942), p. 328.

Colonel William C. Brown,[6] 10th Cavalry.

Colonel Brown was awarded the Silver Star for action at Santiago.[7]

Colonel James Erwin, 7th Cavalry.

Colonel Selah R. H. Tompkins, 7th Cavalry.

Colonel Herbert J. Slocum, 13th Cavalry.

Colonel Slocum directed the first chase of Villa from Columbus immediately after the raid.

Colonel Joseph Gaston, 6th Cavalry.

Colonel James Lockett, 11th Cavalry.

Colonel Wilbur E. Wilder, 5th Cavalry.

There were also four Infantry Colonels: Beacom of the 6th, Allaire of the 16th, Noyes of the 17th, and Penrose of the 24th.

Captain Benjamin D. Foulois commanded the 1st Aero Squadron of the Signal Corps in its first contact with any sort of real military experience in the field.[8]

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[6] The writer's father, Frank E. Shadley, who grew up on the post which Colonel Brown commanded has told him that the men of the 10th affectionately nicknamed the Colonel "Water Closet" because of his initials, which he customarily used instead of his full name.

[7] Who Was Who In America, Volume 1, p. 152.

[8] Tompkins, op. cit., p. 256.

There were two officers connected with the expedition who were not particularly noted for any action at this time. They were, however, destined for distinction at a later time. General Pershing had attached to his staff one Lt. George S. Patton, Jr. The legend which was to grow to epic proportions around this armored force officer began during the expedition. It is said that he was sent out at one time in command of a force which was to capture or kill one of the bandit chieftains. Lt. Patton killed him and returned to the camp with the body of the Mexican tied to the hood of a Dodge car. He later said of the occasion, "This was the first motorized action of the United States Army."[9]

The other officer to achieve a place high in the military annals of the country was Carl Spatz. This general, who later added another 'a' to his name to make the pronunciation clear, was at this time a lieutenant in the Signal Corps' First Aero Squadron. He did not serve actually in Mexico, but during the time of the expedition he did patrol duty along the border from bases at Columbus, New Mexico, and San Antonio, Texas.[10]

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[9] Current Biography 1943 (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1943), p. 570.

[10] Current Biography 1942 (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1942), p. 784.

CHAPTER IV

THE ENTRANCE INTO MEXICO

I. ORGANIZATION

Having been appointed Commander of the Punitive Expedition, General Pershing had the following organizational order published:

Headquarters Punitive Expedition, U. S. Army,
Columbus, N. M., March 14, 1916

General orders

No. 1

1. The forces of this command are organized into a provisional division to be called Punitive Expedition, U. S. Army

. . . . . .

3. The Provisional Division will consist of:

(a) First Provisional Cavalry Brigade, Colonel James Lockett, Commanding.

Troops:

11th Cavalry
13th Cavalry
Battery "C", 6th Field Artillery (attached)

(b) Second Cavalry Brigade, Colonel George A. Dodd, Commanding.

Troops:

7th Cavalry
10th Cavalry
Battery "B", 6th Field Artillery (attached)

(c) First Provisional Infantry Brigade, Colonel John H. Beacom, Commanding;

Troops:

6th Infantry
16th Infantry
Cos. "E" & "H", 2nd Battalion Engineers (attached)

(d) Ambulance Company No. 7, Field Hospital No. 7.

(e) Signal Corps Detachments, First Aero Squadron. Detachment Signal Corps.

(f) Wagon Companies, Numbers 1 and 2

. . . . . .

11. (1) The following telegrams from Department Headquarters are quoted for the information of all concerned and compliance therewith is enjoined:

March 14, 1916.

The Department Commander directs that you inform all subordinates in your command that they will report promptly by wire to proper authorities, who will report to these headquarters the names of all officers and enlisted men accompanying your command who are wounded or killed in action or who die of sickness while in the field. Commanding Officers of base and contonment hospitals will be instructed to make reports. "Bundy."

March 14, 1916.

The greatest caution will be exercised after crossing the border that fire is not opened on troops pertaining to the de facto Government of Mexico as such troops are very likely to be found in country which you will traverse. The greatest care and discretion will have to be exercised by all. "Bundy."

(2) It is enjoined upon all members of the command to make the utmost endeavor to convince all Mexicans that the only purpose of this expedition is to assist in apprehending and capturing Villa and his bandits. Citizens as well as soldiers of the de facto Government will be treated with every consideration. They will not in any case be molested in the peaceful conduct of their affairs, and their property rights will be scrupulously respected.

By Command of Brigadier General Pershing:
DeR. C. Cabell,
Lieutenant Colonel, 10th Cavalry,
Chief of Staff.[1]

II. ENTRANCE

The expedition was to enter Mexico from two points. One column was to start from Culberson's Ranch, some

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[1] Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 72-73.

seventy-five miles southwest of Columbus. This column consisted of the 10th Cavalry from Fort Huachuca, Arizona; the 7th Cavalry from various spots along the border in New Mexico and Arizona; and Battery E of the 6th Field Artillery from Douglas, Arizona. The other column consisted of all the other troops of the expedition, which had been spread all the way from Nogales, Arizona to San Antonio, Texas, and was to start from Columbus. The two columns had originally planned to rendezvous at Ascencion, but, having heard that Villa had already passed Casas Grandes, Pershing changed the plan so that the two columns would meet at Casas Grandes.

The eastern column crossed the border at 12:13 P.M., March 15, 1916, headed by the colors and the regimental standard of the 13th Cavalry. These were the first troops of the American Punitive Expedition to cross the border into Mexico.[2]

The western group, under the personal command of General Pershing, was made up as a flying column. It had no wagon train to carry its supplies, pack trains being used instead. The column was to leave Culberson's Ranch the evening of the 15th, but General Pershing was in an automobile accident and did not arrive until almost midnight. However,

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[2] Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 73-74.

in accordance with his orders, Colonel Dodd had his men ready to go, and at 12:30 A.M., March 16, 1916, the western column crossed the border. Under forced march conditions the column covered the 125 miles from Culberson's Ranch to Colonia Dublan in forty-six hours of elapsed time, having spent only about eighteen hours of the time out of the saddle. This is a remarkable feat, especially considering the fact that the men had been up all of the day the expedition started. The field artillery, Battery B of the 6th Field Artillery, accomplished an even more remarkable feat. Because of the roughness of the road--or trail--taken by the cavalry, the Battery was ordered to proceed by a longer but somewhat smoother route, but they arrived at Colonia Dublan at the same time as the cavalry. They had covered about 145 miles in less than two days.[3]

As the column approached Casas Grandes, Pershing decided not to establish his base there, and, in fact, not to enter the town. Advance scouts had received warning from the Carranza forces at Casas Grandes that it would be safer not to enter that town, because they felt they could not restrain the populace from possibly rash acts against the American troops. A messenger was sent to Colonel Slocum,

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[3] Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 73-74.

at the head of the eastern column, informing him of the change.[4]

The eastern column, starting from Columbus, traveled at a more leisurely pace, partly because of the greater distance, and partly because it was encumbered by the number of troops, the wagon trains, and the motor truck column. Spending five days on the march, they went by way of Palomas, Boca Grande, Espia, Colonia Diaz, Ascencion, Ojo Frederico, and Corralitos and into Colonia Dublan, where they joined General Pershing shortly after noon on March 20.[5]

To have gotten more than four thousand troops 125 miles into Mexico within eleven days after the Columbus raid was something of an achievement. The troops involved had been spread across a strip of territory along approximately one thousand miles of the border. Some of the troops were assembled by rail, especially those in the eastern column which started from Columbus. However, some of the units came under their own power.

The 10th Cavalry came overland from Fort Huachuca to Culberson's Ranch. Captain Troxell of the Second

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[4] "Our Soldiers in Mexico," Independent, 85:440-441, March 27, 1916.

[5] Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 74 ff.

Squadron of the 10th Cavalry wrote the following description of that march, which emphasizes the remarkableness of the next march.

> Our march overland to Culberson's ranch was in no sense severe, but the weather was hot, only now and then did we have hay, watering facilities were always poor, the supply insufficient, and frequently none except at our nightly camps, and the country was sandy and devoid of grazing. We thus marched 160 miles before we entered Mexico, we lost several horses from sand colic, and all horses had begun to feel the effect of the march.[6]

III. COUNTRY

The country over which the expedition operated should perhaps be described here. The country of north central Mexico is neither high plateau nor mountain, but rather a mixture of the two. An article in The Cavalry Journal for July, 1916, described it as follows:

> The country from Culberson's Ranch to Parral may in general be described as a series of immense plains from four to ten miles wide (east and west) and from ten to thirty miles long, separated by mountain ranges trending north and south. A large part of these plains are covered with grass, and water is to be found about every ten or fifteen miles. The country is sparsely settled and the ranches are generally large establishments comprising anywhere from ten to thirty families. . . . One should remember that a very large part of the country mentioned above is at an elevation of from 6,000

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[6] Captain O. C. Troxell, "The Tenth Cavalry in Mexico," The Cavalry Journal, 28:104, October, 1917.

> to 7,000 feet with cold nights and warm days. South of Cusihuirachic the climate is considerably warmer than north of that point.[7]

Most of the action of the campaign was confined to the State of Chihuahua, although the northern part of the State of Durango was the scene of a little military action. Much of the revolutionary activity of the last five years had taken place over this same territory. That, in effect, was one of the reasons for the hostility of most of the civilians. They had seen so much warfare that they were more politically aware than most Mexicans, and they were also experienced enough to know that the best way to deal with an army is to have as little to do with it as possible.

Accustomed as many of the men were to the semi-desert country along the border, they found the arid Mexican country extremely unpleasant for campaigning. Two reactions to one particular spot may serve to point up this dislike of the country.

Just after crossing the border, the second day of the expedition, Major Tompkins described Colonia Diaz as follows:

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[7] "Notes on Campaigning in Mexico," The Cavalry Journal, 27:63, July, 1916.

> This was once a prosperous Mormon Colony, but had long since been destroyed by one or more of the warring factions. At one time the population was 900 but few now remain. The houses consisted of brick and adobe--almost all in ruins. It was laid out in broad streets with sidewalks bordered with cottonwood trees.[8]

Captain Pope, who commanded one of the truck trains, made innumerable trips down as far as Namiquipa and back, shepherding his trucks along. Writing after the expedition he recalls Colonia Diaz as a much nicer place than had Major Tompkins as the Captain had been exposed to the very bad country farther south, which the Major had not yet seen at the time he wrote. Captain Pope's description follows:

> One of the interesting features of the Mexican trail was the contrast between the Mormon settlements, called "Colonia" and the Mexican villages. One of the former settlements, Colonia Diaz, stands out in particular.
>
> Situated in the midst of the desert, some fifty miles from the border, and although abandoned for some years, it was a veritable oasis. Houses in good repair stretched along streets lined with magnificent shade trees. The houses were surrounded by green fields and flowers in profusion. It certainly presented a picture of what the region might become under other conditions.[9]

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[8] Tompkins, op. cit., p. 75.

[9] Captain Francis H. Pope, "Motor Transport Experiences With The Mexican Punitive Expedition," Appendix C in Tompkins, op. cit., p. 253.

Colonia Dublan had been one of the Mormon settlements, also, and it was from here that the expedition began its real work.

CHAPTER V

THE CAMPAIGN OF THE THREE COLUMNS

The activity of the expedition divides itself into four periods: first, the entrance into Mexico, which has already been discussed; second, the campaign of the three columns sent out from the base at Colonia Dublan; third, the campaign by four provisional detachments; and fourth, the occupation and policing, and the evacuation early in 1917.[1] This chapter is concerned with the second phase of the expedition, the campaign of the three columns.

The three cavalry columns were sent out from Dublan because they could carry on the pursuit more rapidly. By sending the columns south in a more or less parallel formation, General Pershing and his staff felt that Villa would be kept from reaching the mountains behind Guerrero, which information indicated was his goal.[2] The columns were made up as follows: The 7th Cavalry, first under the command of Colonel Erwin, and later under Colonel Dodd; the 1st Squadron of the 10th Cavalry under the command of Major

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[1] Harry Aubrey Toulmin, With Pershing in Mexico (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: The Military Service Publishing Company, 1935), p. 91.

[2] Tompkins, op. cit., p. 78.

Evans; and the 2nd Squadron of the 10th under the command of Colonel Brown.[3]

The easiest way to deal with this part of the campaign is to consider separately the activities of each column from March 18 to the end of that month, when this phase was ended.

I. FIRST COLUMN

Upon the arrival of the western column at Colonia Dublan the evening of March 17, word was received that Villa was at San Miguel some fifty miles father south. Since immediate action was necessary, the first column was prepared. At 3:00 A.M. with little chance for rest after their march from Culberson's Ranch, the 7th Cavalry moved out[4] with orders

> To proceed by way of Galeana to the southwest of El Valle, and thence to climb the eastern side of the Sierra Madre Oriental Mountains, through the trail to the eastern edge of the San Miguel plateau.[5]

It was hoped that Villa could be found still gathering supplies there, or that he would be found moving eastward

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[3] Toulmin, op. cit., pp. 92-93; Tompkins, op. cit. pp. 78, 89.

[4] Tompkins, op. cit., p. 79.

[5] Toulmin, op. cit., p. 92.

from that point.[6]

The first column proceeded slowly southward and came to El Valle at noon on March 22. Here they were met by Colonel Salas, who was in command of the Carranza troops at El Valle. He told Colonel Dodd that he had been defeated by Villa at Namiquipa three or four days earlier. Colonel Dodd then ordered his column to proceed by back trails to Namiquipa in order to attack Villa there. Apparently this plan was successful, at least in so far as being unobserved was concerned, but just before Namiquipa was reached scouts brought back news that Colonel Cano of the Carranza army had driven Villa from the town.[7]

Villa's actions after leaving Namiquipa were unknown. Various reports indicated that he had gone through Oso Canyon to the south or southwest, or that he had gone eastward to Los Tanques and then south toward San Geronimo. Word came from Colonel Brown, in command of the second column, that with the help of Carranza forces Villa could be surrounded at Guerrero.[8]

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[6] Tompkins, op. cit., p. 78.

[7] Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 79-80; Toulmin, op. cit., p. 94.

[8] Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 80-83; Toulmin, op. cit., pp. 95-97.

Guerrero. It was now March 28, and this column had marched for fourteen of the last fifteen days. For some days they had been living on fresh beef, beans, and parched corn, which they could buy as they went along. The cold also bothered both animals and men. The night of the 28th Colonel Dodd ordered a night march of thirty-six miles, which would take his column from Bachineva to Guerrero. Because of the great difficulty in finding reliable guides, it was necessary to follow sketchy information from the American guide and the poor maps which were available. There was a direct trail between the two places, which would have enabled the troops to arrive much earlier at Guerrero, but no knowledge of that trail was in the hands of Colonel Dodd until later. Two Mexicans were pressed into service as guides during the night, but their guidance succeeded only in getting the troops into a most difficult position above the town after an exhausting roundabout tour through the mountains.[9]

Toulmin writes the best account of the battle at Guerrero.

> The Guerrero district was governed from the town of Guerrero as its military headquarters. It is located in the lower plain of the valley and is invisible from

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[9] Toulmin, op. cit., pp. 96-97; Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 83-84.

the east until it is nearly reached. The eastern bluffs are high and almost impassable. Deep arroyos run far back into the upper plain and are out of sight until you are nearly at the edge of them. To the west are similar bluffs also cut by deep arroyos extending back to the mountains. It was this difficulty of approach that made it so hard to make the attack on this town.

Colonel Dodd's scheme of maneuver was to place one squadron across the river to the west so that it could gain the foothills west of the town and block the exits from the valley on that side. Major Winans, in command of this troop, descended the eastern bluffs, crossed the river, and pushed on to a position between the town and the hills. As this troop arrived at the valley, mounted men could be seen leaving the village and galloping up the eastern bluffs. The town was then covered to the west by the mounted patrols from this squadron.

At this juncture the Villista commander with the rear guard and train tried to rush the ravine where one of the troops of Major Winans' squadron, detached from the rest of the squadron, was located. He was killed in the attempt and his troops and train were captured. Lieutenant Albert J. Meyer shortly arrived, having volunteered to prevent the ambush by descending the eastern bluff and riding alone through the town filled with Villistas in order to carry this message.

The remainder of the bandits was driven westward. One body of Villistas moved away in an orderly column without firing carrying the Mexican flag which they used as a ruse to get away.

The main body of the American troops pushed along the eastern bluffs, delayed by the arroyos. The bandits could be seen escaping so machine gun fire was opened, later followed by rifle fire, upon the departing bandit column. Lt. Colonel S. R. H. Tompkins was sent with a troop to intercept the bandits escaping from the north of the town. He was later reinforced by Troops "I," "K," and "L," Troop "C" and the Machine Gun Troop. The pursuit of the bandits continued with successive fire actions when the retreating parties dismounted and made a stand. The American horses were practically

> dead on their feet and were unable to get into a sufficiently rapid gait for a charge.[10]

This battle was the largest in which Villa troops were involved with American. The American casualties were five men wounded. The Mexicans suffered thirty dead and an unknown number wounded. General Hernandez, commander of the Villista force was among the dead. No prisoners were taken, but property was captured to the amount of two machine guns, forty-four rifles, thirteen horses, and twenty-three mules.

Apparently the Villista troops were preparing to leave Guerrero at the time Dodd attacked. According to the doctor in the town, who had cared for Villa's wounds, received in one of the battles with the Carranzista, Villa had left Guerrero about two in the morning in a wagon, unable to travel on horseback. It seems that if the column coming across the mountains from Bachineva to Guerrero had made a different choice at one of the forks in the trail they would have encountered Villa, and the chase would have been over. At any rate, this was the closest the American forces ever got to Villa, missing him only by a few hours and a few miles.[11]

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[10] Toulmin, op. cit., pp. 98-100.

[11] Tompkins, op. cit., p. 87.

This was the last action of the first column. They were split up into groups of one or two troops to guard various passes and towns. Colonel Dodd was cheered in Congress when news of the battle was read there, and shortly afterward was nominated and confirmed in the rank of Brigadier General.[12]

II. SECOND COLUMN

The second and third columns, respectively, were ordered to proceed by train from Colonia Dublan on the evening of March 19. The columns each set out with two days' supplies, an indication of how poorly organized the supply system was at first. The train which the two columns were to use had been sent from Juarez and arrived at Dublan on the morning of the 19th. The cars were in very poor condition, and most of the day was wasted in repairing them, and in collecting wood for the engine. Finally they set out on what was supposed to be a three hour trip to Cuevita, where the second column was to detrain. The train looked like a genuine Mexican troop train, with the horses inside the cars and the men and

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[12] Ibid., p. 88. Congressional Record, First Session, 64th Congress, LIII, p. 5220, 5261, March 31, 1916.

equipment piled on top, because there were not enough cars for them to ride inside.[13] Water and wood were difficult to obtain, and it was necessary to stop the train and get the troops off to cut wood, after which it would be necessary to use the wood to send the engine somewhere to get water.[14]

As a result of all the difficulties, the second column under Colonel Brown detrained at El Rucio, about twenty-seven miles from Colonia Dublan at 11:00 A.M. the next morning, having spent eighteen hours on the train without completing a trip which should have taken only three hours.

This column spent the next ten days in a fruitless search for Villa, but were always from two to ten days behind him. At San Jose de Babicora, Brown met with Colonel Cano, a Carranza officer, who gave him a great deal of false information concerning Villa's whereabouts. Brown was able to winnow out enough truth to be able to send a message to Colonel Dodd, with the first column, stating that Villa was apparently somewhere in the vicinity

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[13] Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 79, 89.

[14] O. C. Troxell, "The Tenth Cavalry in Mexico," The Cavalry Journal, 28:105, October, 1917.

of Bachineva.[15] It was this message, received on March 26, that enabled Colonel Dodd to find the Villa forces at Guerrero and engage them in battle.[16] Tompkins sums up the activity of this command as follows:

> At the start this column was delayed nearly a day because of broken down railway equipment. Then the Mexican Colonel Cano lied to Brown about Villa's whereabouts and delayed him through the pretense of discussing plans of cooperation. Of course, Cano probably knew where Villa was, but he played Carranza's game of obstruction while pretending to cooperate. But Brown was an old Indian fighter. He had served in the far west in the Indian country during some strenuous campaigns, and he was a hard man to lose when he once hit a trail. His marches during these 13 days were over rough country, at high elevations, and some of them were very long. When his command could rest in camp over a day he was in the saddle running down the scent of the fleeing Villa, so when we consider the treachery and intentionally false information as part of the Mexican plan to delay and if possible nullify the American pursuit, it is indeed remarkable that when he reached San Diego del Monte he was but three days behind Villa.[17]

III. THIRD COLUMN

Major Evans, in command of the other column, proceeded slowly southward on the train after Brown's column had gotten off at El Rucio. Early on the morning of March 21 an accident overturned two cars, injuring eleven

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[15] Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 91-93.

[16] Ibid., p. 88.

[17] Ibid., p. 94.

men and many horses. A day was lost getting equipment sorted out, and the injured men cared for. The next morning the column detrained, some eighty miles from Colonia Dublan, two and a half days having been consumed in the journey. The column marched southward, and on the 24th jointed Colonel Brown's column at San Jose de Babicora according to an order received on the 23rd from General Pershing. After a vain attempt to capture Villa at Santa Catalina, from which place he had departed some days before, the two columns separated again on March 28. On the 30th they joined again and went into camp at San Diego del Monte.[18]

The real reason that none of the three columns managed to catch up with Villa was the lack of cooperation shown by the Carranza forces. They apparently knew where Villa was most of the time, and they assuredly lied about it. This should not have occurred since a proclamation by General Obregon, showing that an agreement had been reached, was circulated among the military leaders, and also carried by the three American columns. Of course, little help could be expected from the natives of the region since they were the very people from whom Villa had recruited most of

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[18] Tompkins, on. cit., pp. 95-98.

his forces, and he had roused them long since to a hatred of Americans.[19]

Looking back it was possible for the Headquarters of the Expedition to reconstruct Villa's route. March 19 he had an engagement with the Carranza forces at Namiquipa. He left there on the 20th, stopping that night at El Rosal. Next day he went as far as La Carucheva, and the next to Quemada. He was at Rubio on the 23rd. He camped at San Diego del Monte on the 25th, and at San Ysidro the next night. On the 27th he fought there with the Carranza forces and departed eastward from Guerrero early on the morning of March 29.[20]

At a conference of the Headquarters staff with the leaders of the columns, one of the scouts put the whole situation at the end of March very succinctly. He drawled to Pershing, "As I see it, General, we have got Villa entirely surrounded--on one side."[21]

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[19] Ibid., p. 100.

[20] Toulmin, op. cit., p. 103.

[21] Ibid., p. 50.

CHAPTER VI

THE CAMPAIGN OF THE FOUR DETACHMENTS

The three columns sent out from Colonia Dublan on March 18 and 19 were made up solely of the troops which had arrived there in the flying column which had started from Culberson's Ranch. The troops from Columbus arrived at Dublan on March 20. The cavalry in the eastern column was organized into four detachments to follow Villa and aid the three columns already on the trail in any way possible.

The commanders of these detachments were: Major Elmer Lindsley, 13th Cavalry; Major Frank Tompkins, 13th Cavalry; Major Robert L. Howze, 11th Cavalry; and Colonel Henry T. Allen, 11th Cavalry. Major Lindsley had under him the Second Squadron plus Troop L of the 13th, a total of five troops. Major Tompkins had Troops K and M and a Machine Gun Platoon from the 13th Cavalry, and Troops I and K of the 10th Cavalry, four and one half troops altogether. Major Howze commanded a provisional squadron, four troops of the 11th Cavalry; and Colonel Allen likewise had a provisional squadron of the 11th Cavalry plus two Machine Gun Detachments.[1]

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[1] Tompkins, op. cit., p. 101.

I. FIRST DETACHMENT

Major Lindsley's detachment was the first one ordered out. He left Dublan the evening of March 20 with orders to proceed southwest to Chuichupa. It was believed at this time that Villa might possibly elude the three columns already chasing him and escape westward into the mountains. If Villa had not passed through Chuichupa Lindsley was to regain contact with the other troops and try to get further information as to Villa's whereabouts.[2]

After a rough trip on the back trails, Lindsley's column reached Chuichupa in the afternoon of March 24. Camp was made, and patrols were sent out to locate any trace of Villa and to contact Pershing's Headquarters. Finding no evidence that Villa had been in the vicinity, the Squadron moved on to Musica on the 25th. Next day orders came to proceed to San Miguel, and the column set out that night. On the 30th the command moved on to San Jose de Babicora, where they took over the guard duties which had been assigned to Major Evans' column earlier in the campaign.[3]

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[2] Toulmin, op. cit., pp. 104-105.

[3] Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 103-109, et passim.

Describing the work of this squadron Colonel Tompkins sums up the task of the tooper on the expedition in a manner which not only applies to those in Lindsley's column, but to all of the Cavalry that operated in Mexico.

> Words cannot describe the tedious effort demanded of the tired trooper when he is forced to dismount and lead his weary horse over a difficult trail on a dark night, making effort to keep in touch with the horse in front, for to lose contact in the dark means going astray, causing long delays in reassembling the column. The soldier is burdened with a belt filled with ammunition in addition to the heavy Colt pistol attached thereto. He also has a bandoleer of sixty rounds slung diagonally across his body. He must carry his rifle in one hand and lead the horse with the other. Many times the horses are so played out that they hang back and make the troopers pull them along. The soldier is animated by the prospect of meeting the enemy, but the poor horse has nothing to stimulate him to abnormal effort except the instinct of service which is born in him. It is too dark to see the trail, so horses and men go stumbling along, drunk with sleep and fatigue, with the horse sometimes on top of the man. No wonder it is a common saying "he swears like a trooper." The trooper learns to swear when leading his mount in a long column, on a night march, over a rough trail.[4]

II. SECOND DETACHMENT

The second detachment, under the command of Major Tompkins, left Colonia Dublan the afternoon of March 21, headed toward Galeana. They were warned away from Casas Grandes, only a few miles from Dublan, by a Mexican officer who rode out to warn them that they would be met with force

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[4] Tompkins, op. cit., p. 109.

if they tried to pass through the town. The squadron arrived at Galeana the morning of the 22nd. The next day orders were received by air to go into camp at El Valle. A sort of base had been established there, and half of Major Tompkins' command, the two troops of the 10th Cavalry, were detached at this point.[5]

The column proceeded from El Valle south toward Cruces, where it arrived the afternoon of the 25th. The 26th the small command moved on to Namiquipa where another base had been established. Here they remained until the evening of March 30, principally occupied with gathering food and forage. They left there at 11:30 that night under orders from Pershing, delivered by Lieutenant Patton, to proceed to Providencia in order to cut off Villistas fleeing from their defeat at Guerrero a few days earlier. Patton, interpreting his orders broadly, directed Tompkins to the north of Bachineva, whereas Tompkins himself had wanted to go into the city where, as events turned out, he might have surprised a large force of Villistas, who spent the night of the 31st there. On April 1 the command arrived at Bachineva and went into camp next to the 11th Cavalry,

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[5] Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 110-113, et passim.

which had arrived there some time earlier.[6]

On April 2, after a conference the night before with General Pershing, Major Tompkins set out with his two troops, plus a pack train of twelve mules, on a roving patrol with orders to head southward. Tompkins thought it was likely that Villa would head toward Parral, because he had friends there and could recuperate from his wounds there.[7]

A short way from Bachineva Tompkins found the trail of the Villista band, which had been in that town two days before. He followed the trail southward toward Santa Maria where camp was made the night of April 2. The next morning they arrived at Aguas Calientes, where Colonel Brown had engaged the Villistas two days earlier. Following Brown's trail now, in support, the command continued to Napavechic that evening. April 4 the command moved on to San Antonio, where they found Brown's column. The two commanders conferred, and on the basis of their mutual information, Tompkins decided to go on south to San Borja and Parral. That night the squadron camped at Cusihuirachic.[8]

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[6] Ibid., pp. 113-117, et passim.

[7] Tompkins, op. cit., p. 118.

[8] Ibid., pp. 128-130, et passim.

The next afternoon they approached San Borja. Just outside the town Tompkins held a conference with General Cavazos, commander of the Carranza forces in the district. The general advised the American commander not to enter the town nor to proceed farther south. He said that Villa was now dead and had been buried at Santa Ana. Tompkins did not believe him but pulled back and camped at a village four miles north of San Borja. He decided to detour around San Borja and go on toward Santa Ana.[9]

The squadron made the march to Santa Rosalia on April 6. Here they were met by a very friendly Carranza force. They remained here over the 7th, and that day Colonel Brown's command passed through on their way to Parral by a different route than that Tompkins was following. On the 8th the squadron marched to Fresnites and on the 9th as far as Sauz, where good grazing was found. The morning of the 9th they had a brush with a patrol of Carranza soldiers who fired on them and fled.[10]

The squadron reached Valle de Zaragosa the 10th. As they came into town some twenty Villistas, who had been attempting to loot the town, moved out the other side.

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[9] Ibid., pp. 130-131.

[10] Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 132-134, et passim.

Information received here indicated that the Villa forces were heading southward toward the border of Durango. A Carranza officer arrived here from Parral to tell them that arrangements would be made there for a camp and forage. On the 11th the command moved on to Santa Cruz de Villegas.[11]

Parral. The morning of the 12th Tompkins set out for Parral. Under the impression that they were to be welcomed there, the officers and men were in good spirits. As they came up to the town about noon there was no official waiting to meet them, so Tompkins proceeded in as far as the guard house near the railroad station, and asked for a guide to the military headquarters, which was furnished. Upon his arrival at the headquarters, the commander, General Lozano, immediately demanded to know why he had entered the town. The general finally agreed to furnish a campsite away from town and to arrange for the purchase of supplies. The two American troops were formed in front of the headquarters, making an impressive sight and attracting quite a crowd. By the time the general began to lead the Americans out of town the crowd has begun to yell

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[11] Ibid., pp. 134-135.

"Viva Villa" and "Viva Mexico." As they left the town the crowd began to press closely on the groops. Then Carranza troops opened sporadic fire. Tompkins deployed the rear guard and the last company and sent word to General Lozano at the head of the column. He passed Tompkins, on the way into town to find out what was happening, and denied all responsibility for the firing. The firing became heavier, and one American sergeant was killed.

Seeing that he would be outflanked, Tompkins began to withdraw across country north and east. When he found the road to Santa Cruz de Villegas, over which they had just passed, he ordered the column to fall back northward on the road.

The civilian crowd following dropped out a short way from town, but the troops followed, firing continuously. Trying to avoid excessive losses, and also to avoid a pitched battle with Carranza forces, which had been forbidden by General Pershing, Tompkins withdrew as carefully as possible. Several more Americans were wounded, including Major Tompkins, who was shot in the shoulder. Two men performed acts of such heroism in rescuing wounded men that they later were awarded Distinguished Service Medals. One more enlisted man was killed in the withdrawal. Just before reaching Santa Cruz, one troop made a stand and

drove off the Mexicans temporarily, killing forty-two of them. After the American troops had secured Santa Cruz the Mexicans formed to attack again, but one shot which knocked a Mexican off his horse eight hundred yards from the town, caused them to reconsider.

A note was sent by General Lozano requesting that the troops withdraw farther north. Major Tompkins, realizing his still difficult position, was more than willing to palaver in order to gain time. As they had come into the town the Major had sent on scouts to find Colonel Brown, whom he knew to be not far behind. Brown marched into town at 7:30 P.M., and Lozano and his forces then withdrew.[12]

III. THIRD DETACHMENT

The third detachment, under Major Howze, left Colonia Dublan the morning of March 24. This detachment met with no difficulties from either Villista or Carranza forces. However, they were in a particularly unfortunate position in regard to their animals. The horses with which they were supplied had made the trip from Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, to Columbus by train, spending five days cooped

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[12] Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 137-143, et passim.

up in cattle cars. Immediately after their arrival, before they had had time to recuperate, they had started for Colonia Dublan on the difficult trial into Chihuahua. The animals were well-nigh exhausted, and were still to face the difficulties of hard trails which the other columns were facing.

Nonetheless, they marched out and moved slowly southward, scouting all the time for traces of Villa and his men. They went through Galeana, El Valle, Namiquipa, where they camped with Tompkins detachment, San Geronimo, and Providencia, arriving finally at Bachineva on April 2. The detachment remained in this vicinity until called to Santa Cruz de Villegas after Tompkins' engagement at Parral.[13]

IV. FOURTH DETACHMENT

The fourth detachment, under Colonel Allen, started from Colonia Dublan the morning of March 20 bound for Namiquipa with a large pack train of supplies. They arrived there at the forward base on April 2. Allen set out from here the same day for El Oso. Finding no trace of Villa there, he went on in a large arc to Los Tanques

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[13] Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 121-133, et passim.

and then to San Geronimo, where he arrived the 4th and remained the 5th. The weaker part of the command was left here, and the rest proceeded to San Antonio by way of Lake Itascate and Sitio Las Varas and Rancho Delores, arriving at their goal on April 8.[14]

Here General Pershing met with Colonel Allen. Pablo Lopez, Villa's second in command, was reported to be nearby, heading south. Allen was directed to pursue him. In the interest of mobility, more cutting out was done, and the detachment left San Antonio April 9, with a force of four officers and eighty-four enlisted men. The column searched diligently that day, arriving late at night at Bustillo, where Lopez's parents lived. Here it was confirmed that the Mexican had gone southward. Allen continued in pursuit on the 10th and 11th. On the 12th Allen again met Pershing, who told him to keep going south but to look for Villa rather than Lopez. On the 13th the southward march was continued, and on the 14th Allen met a messenger who was carrying orders to Colonel Brown, who was supposed to be in a delicate position near Parral. (This was two days after Tompkins' fight there.) So Colonel Allen changed his route and made a fifty mile march into Santa

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[14] Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 124-125.

Cruz de Villegas, arriving there at 6:00 A.M., April 15, followed in a few hours by Major Howze and his detachment.[15]

This ended the campaign of the four detachments, which had lasted less than a month from the time Major Lindsley left Colonia Dublan to the time three of the detachments and Colonel Brown's column rendezvoused at Santa Cruz de Villegas. The over-all plan for this phase had been for Tompkins to form a spearhead, Howze to cover the right rear, Colonel Brown's earlier formed column to cover the left rear, and Colonel Allen to remain about three days to the rear. General Pershing had conceived this intelligent plan, and its wisdom was evident after the fight at Parral, when Brown came up within a few hours and Allen and Howze joined them within two days. This plan provided an extremely flexible force and yet one that could be assembled rapidly in enough strength to meet any force which the Mexicans might gather to throw against them.[16]

V. COLONEL BROWN'S COLUMN

In connection with the campaign of the four detachments, it is well to consider the further action of Colonel

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15 Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 125-127, et passim.

16 Toulmin, op. cit., pp. 106-107.

Brown's column. By March 31, the date which ended the action of the three columns originally sent out from Colonia Dublan, Colonel Brown had reached San Diego del Monte. Failing to contact General Pershing from here, he decided to move on toward Guerrero. The afternoon of April 1 he came upon approximately one hundred and fifty Villistas at a ranch called Aguas Calientes. All six troops, including the Machine Gun Troop, attacked and pursued the fleeing Mexicans. No Americans were hurt although one horse was shot.[17]

The next day the command divided to follow two Villista trails to Napavechic Ranch. The 3rd of April the column went on to San Antonio. Brown was attempting all the time to get in touch with Pershing to report, but failed to accomplish this, except once, until the 15th. On the 4th Brown remained in camp at San Antonio, after a threat by General Cavazos that any advance would be a hostile act. The colonel spent the 5th and 6th trying to arrange some way for the column to continue southward. On the 6th an order arrived by airplane telling Brown to proceed to Parral, so the next day the column went as far as Cieneguita, just north of San Borja. On the 8th the column

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[17] Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 145-146.

camped at Satevo. April 9 Brown moved on toward Tres Hermanos. Outside the town the Americans were welcomed by General Garza and his staff. He provided a camp and asked them to remain a day in rest. Brown, however, decided to move on, and on the 10th the column camped at Sauz. Next day they reached Valle de Zaragoza. Here Captain Mesa, the man who had told Major Tompkins that he would be welcomed in Parral, gave the same information to Brown. On the 12th the column moved south to a ranch just eight miles north of Santa Cruz. They had barely unsaddled when the messengers arrived from Tompkins requesting aid, and within an hour Brown's column had joined Tompkins at Santa Cruz de Villegas.[18]

VI. OTHER ACTIVITIES

During this time General Pershing was supervising the activities of all forces. He managed to turn up continually to hold council with and to advise his troops and commanders. He covered the entire field of operations by moving quickly, using automobiles for the sake of speed. His party consisted of three cars and the consequently small group which could be carried in them. But the

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[18] Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 146-153, et passim.

general took the risks involved by the small party in order to keep in more or less constant contact with his forces.[19]

It was during the period covered by the campaign of the four detachments that the airplane was used most frequently. Pershing attempted to use the 1st Aero Squadron for carrying messages to his scattered commanders. Captain Foulois, the commander of the squadron, relates that the most dramatic incident of the air campaign occurred on April 7th, when two planes flew to Chihuahua with dispatches for the American consul. Captain Foulois was arrested upon landing, but soon released. The planes were damaged by the curious and somewhat hostile crowds; holes were burned with cigarettes; cloth was slashed with knives; and bolts and nuts were taken out. The pilots decided to move the planes to a safer place. One got off all right, but the other was stoned in the take off. This plane had flown only a little way when part of the fuselage flew off and damaged the tail section. The plane was landed and guarded this time until repairs

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[19] Ibid., p. 127.

could be made the next day.[20]

The weather and altitude were very hard on the planes, which were not heavy enough nor powerful enough to work under the conditions involved. During the first month that the squadron operated in Mexico, five of the eight airplanes started with were wrecked, and one was damaged in a landing so far from repair facilities that nothing could be done. By April 20 only two planes could be flown, and they were unsafe for regular service, so they were returned to Columbus where they were condemned and destroyed.[21]

VII. SUMMATION

This phase of the campaign was characterized quite aptly as "the needle and haystack hunt." Little information as to what was going on reached the United States, and most news was based on rumor and supposition.[22]

A reporter for the New York Tribune, who was not allowed to mention names of places made the following

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[20] Captain Benjamin D. Foulois, "Report of the Operation of the First Aero Squadron Signal Corps, With the Mexican Punitive Expedition, For Period March 15 to August 15, 1916," Appendix B in Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 240-241.

[21] Foulois, op. cit., p. 243.

[22] "The Needle and Haystack Hunt," Independent, 86:127-128, April 24, 1916.

report:

> With the prospects for the capture of Villa apparently no better than they have been since the battle at Guerrero, the campaign has entered into still another phase--a process of minute search and elimination. Every adobe, every clump of tangled undergrowth that may afford a refuge, is examined in quest of Villa and his generals.
>
> Dramatic night sleuthing and dangerous day combing of arroyos, mesas and canyons have marked the work of our column. Much of the night the men are in the saddle, tumbling into well-earned slumber with the advent of broad day, and buckling again to their work before the afternoon sun has permitted the first faint touches of the evening chill to steal upon them.[23]

This campaign, which was typical of the cavalry work against the Indians and in the Civil War, was the last time that cavalry was ever used in its traditional manner. It operated completely cut off from a permanent base, over country which strained the men, the animals, and the equipment almost to the breaking point. Of the almost fifteen hundred men who had made up the detachments when they left Colonia Dublan, only a little more than half remained active at the time of the battle at Parral.[24]

This was the end of the southern advance of the Punitive Expedition. Henceforth the American forces were to be engaged in policing and occupation in Chihuahua.

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[23] Loc. cit.

[24] Tompkins, op. cit., p. 144.

CHAPTER VII

LAST PHASES OF THE EXPEDITION

I. COLONEL DODD'S CAMPAIGN

Colonel Dodd's column, one of the original groups sent from Colonia Dublan, did not join directly in the campaign of the four columns. A week after the fight at Guerrero on March 27, Dodd was ordered to continue moving south to scout for traces of Villa along the eastern slope of the continental divide. If possible he was to prevent Villa's escape through the mountains to the west.[1]

From April 8 until the 13th, Dodd and his column remained at Minaca, continuing their scouting. On reports from the natives they decided that a large band of Villistas, under the command of Cervantes, were to the west of Minaca. From the evening of the 13th until the morning of the 15th, the column chased the Mexicans until the trail died out. Investigation showed that small groups of three or four had left the main trail in various places until the whole group, some one hundred fifty to two hundred men, had been dispersed over the countryside.

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[1] Tompkins, op. cit., p. 119.

Dodd was then joined by a Carranza officer with some forty men, who were also chasing the same band. Following the Mexican Major, who had asked to lead, the Americans made a series of difficult marches to Yoquivo, which the Villistas had raided a short time before. Prepared to make an early morning attack, the Americans arrived to find their erstwhile allies resting, and the bandits gone. Dodd maintained that the Carranza Major had warned the bandits. However, he still felt that he was on a hot trail, and did not stop.[2]

Tomochic. The American column left Yoquivo at 3:00 P.M., April 21, and traveled until midnight on the trial of the Cervantes band. At dawn they took up the trail again and traveled until three o'clock in the afternoon, when they came in sight of Tomochic, a tiny village far below in the valley. Bandits could be seen leaving the town, and all possible speed was made getting down into the valley. Because of the difficulty of the trail, however, the descent took an hour and a half.

The town was taken with only scattered firing from the enemy. Colonel Dodd sent a squadron--half of his command--in pursuit of what had looked like escaping bandits,

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[2] Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 173-177, et passim.

but proved to be only a herd of horses. While the command was divided, the mass of the bandits, who had been some ways up the trail at the time the Americans had entered the town, returned, and a heavy fire fight ensued. (This apparently was the only time any Villistas were so willing to fight that they returned to battle when they might easily have fled.) It was impossible for the Americans to dislodge the Mexicans before dark. At that time they retired, and Dodd did not order pursuit because of the difficulty of trailing at night. The troops remained alerted for another attack the next day, which was Easter, but the Mexicans did not reappear.[3]

This battle resulted in the dispersion of the band under Cervantes. Colonel Dodd, thus, was in command of the force which more than any other effected the breaking up of Villa's forces, having defeated large groups of them at Guerrero and again at Tomochic. After this battle he took his troops back to Providencia, where they were joined by the rest of the regiment and remained until early June, engaged in patrolling. Then he assumed command of the camp at El Valle. While here he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General, and was retired on July 28, because of

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[3] Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 178-180; Toulmin, op. cit., p. 108.

age.[4]

Colonel Tompkins commends him as follows:

> For General Dodd no clue was too faint or improbable to follow down, no trail of pony tracks too slight to examine. No marches were too long and no way too rough for him to undertake. He scorned hardships, and was ever a splendid example of hardihood to officers and men. Red-shirted Tracy, the invaluable guide and scout, said of this cavalryman, whom he observed at close range for several weeks of vigorous campaigning: 'Colonel Dodd ate less, slept less, and worked harder than any other man in the command.'[5]

II. DISTRICT PATROLLING

By May 3, all the troops that had previously gathered at Santa Cruz de Villegas had retired over a hundred miles northward to San Antonio. Here they were joined by additional troops, and that place was established as the most forward American base. All or parts of the following organizations were stationed there: 5th, 10th, 11th, and 13th Cavalry, and the 6th Infantry. The regiments were reorganized into their proper parts. It was felt by this time that more efficient operation might have been secured during the arduous campaigning of the chase if the organizations had remained stable. The breaking up of

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[4] Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 161-162.

[5] Tompkins, op. cit., p. 182.

all the cavalry regiments into provisional units had shown that there was a loss of spirit as well as an impossibly tangled situation in regards to personal records and government property.[6]

To meet the current situation, which called for different treatment than that previously used, the following order was issued:

> Headquarters Punitive Expedition, U. S. Army
> In the Field, Namiquipa, Mexico, April 29, 1916.
> General Orders
> No. 26.
>
> 1. As the result of the arduous and persistent pursuit of Villa by various columns of this command, his forces have suffered losses of approximately one hundred killed with unknown numbers wounded, and have been broken into smaller bands and scattered to different sections of the State of Chihuahua and elsewhere. The situation has changed to the extent that our troops no longer pursue a cohesive force of considerable size, but by surprise with small, swiftly moving detachments they must hunt down isolated portions of the country. For this purpose the country to be covered for the present is accordingly divided into districts and apportioned to organizations available for such duty.
> 2. The commander of each separate district will organize his own agents and establish as far as possible his own service of information. Every assisstance will be given from these headquarters in providing guides and interpreters and in furnishing information. It is also directed that this office and adjacent commanders be furnished with all information of importance that comes to the knowledge of district commanders, especially such as would influence operations of troops in adjacent districts. Each district commander will act on his own initiative on any information that seems likely to lead to

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[6] Ibid., pp. 184-188, et passim.

the capture of any of the participants in the Columbus raid, and will keep the Commanding General and, as far as practicable, the Brigade Commander, advised of all movements in his district.
3. All officers are reminded that this expedition is operating within the limits of a friendly nation, whose peaceful inhabitants should be treated with every consideration. It is also desirable to maintain the most cordial relations, and cooperate as far as feasible, with the forces of the de facto government. Experience so far has taught, however, that our troops are always in more or less danger of being attacked, not only by hostile followers of Villa, but even by others who profess friendship, and precaution must be taken accordingly. In case of unprovoked attack, the officer in command will, without hesitation, take the most vigorous measures at his disposal, to administer severe punishment to the offenders, bearing in mind that any other course is likely to be construed as a confession of weakness.
4. The following districts to be covered are embraced within the limits prescribed. The boundary lines are to be understood as indicating in general the territory over which district commanders are for the present to operate, but will not limit their efforts to secure information, often otherwise inobtainable, nor confine their activities when in actual pursuit of Villista bands. In locating their headquarters, district commanders, under direction of their brigade commanders, will give due consideration to the question of supply.

Namiquipa District:

Commencing at a point north of Alimo on the 13th parallel, thence east to the Mexican Central Railroad inclusive, south to Sauz, generally west through Tepehuanes, San Miguel, Madera to Tio Chico, north to the 13th parallel, thence east to Alimo.

Bustillos District:

Commencing at San Miguel, thence along southern boundary of Namiquipa district to Sauz, south to near Salas, west to San Andres and San Antonio, and excluding both towns, thence southwest to Mal Paso, thence north to Bachineva and San Miguel, including both towns.

Satevo District:

Commencing at San Antonio, thence east through and including San Andres to Mapula, thence along the

Mexican Central Railroad to Jimenez, Parral to Santa Barbara, thence northwest to San Lorenzo and San Antonio.

San Borja District:

Commencing at San Antonio, southeast to San Lorenzo and Santa Barbara, west to Guachochic, north to Garuchic, northwest to Rancho de Santiago, northeast to San Antonio.

Guerrero District:

Commencing at San Miguel, thence south through Bachineva to Mal Paso, southwest to Rancho de Santiago, southeast to Carichic, south to Guachochic, west to third meridian west of Chihuahua, north to a point west of Madera, thence east to Madera, thence southeast to San Miguel.

By command of Brigadier General Pershing
DeR. C. Cabell,
Lieutenant Colonel, 10th Cavalry,
Chief of Staff.[7]

The troops were assigned so that one of the experienced regiments of cavalry was located in each district. During the first week of May the regiments took their assigned places, and the work of scouring the country and pursuing small bands got under way.[8]

In patrol duty the Americans ran across little groups of the bandits and managed to dispose of several of Villa's chief aides. Cardenas, with two other men, was killed at his home, where he was found by a foraging party under the commend of Lieutenant Patton. Referring to the fact that he returned to his base with the bodies of the dead Mexicans tied to the hood of the car he was using, Patton said that

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[7] Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 189-190.

[8] Tompkins, op. cit., p. 189.

this was the first mechanized action of the U. S. Army.[9]

Cervantes was killed by a party of infantrymen, their greatest achievement of the campaign. They were out mapping roads and hunting cattle when they were attacked by nine Villistas. An infantry private killed two of the Mexicans, one of whom was identified as Cervantes, leader of the band which Dodd had broken up some time earlier. In this small fight one infantry sergeant was killed.

Gutierrez, called a general, and believed by some to have been the second in command at Columbus, was captured by a lieutenant of the 10th Cavalry and sent to Texas, where he was tried, convicted, and sentenced to prison for his part in the raid.[10]

III. THE FIGHT AT OJOS AZULES

On May 4, before all the troops had left San Antonio, Pershing received a plea for help from the people of Cusihuiriachic. Two Villa lieutenants had threatened the town and informed inhabitants that they were preparing a force of one thousand men to attack the American camp at San Antonio. Pershing sent Major Howze with six troops and

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[9] Cf. supra, pp. 41-42.

[10] Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 201-206, et passim.

a machine gun platoon of the 11th Cavalry to Cusihuirachic with orders to attack the bandit group as circumstances offered.[11]

Howze's force arrived at Cusihuirachic at midnight and were met by the Carranza forces who had engaged the Villistas that day.

> It appears that they fought desperately all day, with an hour off for luncheon, and both retired in good order at nightfall, casualties zero for both sides.

The Carranza troops refused to furnish guides to the Villista camp, so guides were procured from the town. They proceeded about twenty miles to Ojos Azules Rancho where the bandit force had camped. The Americans arrived at 5:45, just after dawn.

The plan of attack was to send a troop around each side of the ranch to cut off the escape routes. The Indian scouts were sent ahead as skirmishers, and unfortunately aroused the Mexicans. The barbed wire around the ranch buildings prevented the rapid execution of the plan, so most of the Mexicans quickly departed from the ranch buildings. They ran toward the field where their horses were grazing. Those who reached horses were pursued for

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[11] Tompkins, op. cit., p. 191.

two and a half hours and completely dispersed.

Some thirty of the Villistas took up positions on the roofs of the buildings and sprayed inaccurate fire on the attacking Americans. The machine gun platoon was put into action somewhat late because the weak condition of their mounts had prevented their arriving with the other troops. The Mexicans left at the ranch were all either killed or captured.

The total Mexican losses were something between forty and eighty, with an unknown number of wounded. Not a single American was killed or wounded. Some prisoners were taken, but were all released because it was impossible to distinguish between pacificos and Villistas. Four Carranza prisoners were rescued, who had been scheduled for execution that morning.

This was the first engagement of any size in which the Apache scouts had participated. First Sergeant Chicken of the Apaches, characterized the whole affair by saying: "Huli! Damn fine fight."[12]

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[12] 1st Lieutenant S. M. Williams, "The Cavalry Fight at Ojos Azules," The Cavalry Journal, 27:405-410, January, 1917.

IV. CARRIZAL

By the first of June the district system had been given up, and the American troops had been drawn back along the line of communication, with Namiquipa established as the forward base. Mexican forces were becoming more and more threatening all the time. General Trevino informed Pershing that any further movement of the American forces east, west, or south would be met by force. Pershing replied that he was bound by no orders except those from his own government.[13]

Because it now became important to know about the movement of the Carranza forces as well as those of the bandits, constant patrolling was necessary despite General Trevino's order. On June 16, two troops of the 10th Cavalry, Troop C, under Captain Charles T. Boyd, and Troop K, under Captain Lewis S. Morey, were sent eastward from the line of communication on a reconnaisance of Mexican forces. They met at Santo Domingo and proceeded to carry out their mission together.[14]

Captain Morey's account of what happened, written on the spot, tells the story best.

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[13] Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 207-208.

[14] Captain Lewis S. Morey, "The Cavalry Fight at Carrizal," The Cavalry Journal, 27:448-456, January, 1917.

Carrizal, Mexico, June 21, 1916, 9:15 a.m. To Commanding Officer at Ojo Frederico: My troop reached Ojo Santo Domingo at 5:30 p.m. June 20. Met C troop under Captain Boyd. I came under Captain Boyd's command and marched my troop in rear for Carrizal at 4:15 a.m., reaching open field to southeast of town at 6:30 a.m.

Captain Boyd sent in a note requesting permission to pass through the town. This was refused; stated we could go to the north but not east. Captain Boyd said he was going to Ahumada at this time.

He was talking with Carranza commander. General Gomez sent a written message that Captain Boyd could bring his force in town and have a conference. Captain Boyd feared an ambush. He was under the impression that the Mexicans would run as soon as we fired.

We formed for attack, his intention being to move up to the line of about 120 Mexicans on the edge of the town. We formed, C Troop on the left in line of skirmishers, one platoon of K Troop on right of line and another K Troop platoon on extreme right, echeloned a little to the rear.

When we were within 200 yards the Mexicans opened fire, and a strong one, before we fired a shot. Then we opened up. They did not run. To make a long account short, after about an hour's fire, in which both troops had advanced, C Troop to a position of Mexican machine gun and K Troop closing in slightly to the left, we were very busy on the right keeping off a flank attack. A group of Mexicans left town, went around our rear and led our horses off at a gallop.

At about 9 o'clock one platoon of K Troop which was on our right, fell back. Sergeant said he could not stay there. Both platoons fell back about 1000 yards to the west, and then together with some men of C Troop who were there these men scattered.

I was slightly wounded. Captain Boyd, a man told me, was killed. Nothing was seen of Lieutenant Adair after fight started, so man I saw stated.

I am hiding in a hole 2000 yards from field and have one other wounded man and three men with me.

Morey, Captain.[15]

In this battle, something less than seventy Americans faced several hundred Mexicans. The Americans were badly defeated. Two officers and ten men were killed in the battle, one officer and ten men were wounded, and twenty-three men were taken prisoner. The casualty list was well over half of the number involved. The Mexicans lost forty-five killed and fifty-three wounded. This was the only defeat suffered by the Americans during the entire expedition. Apparently the whole situation could have been avoided had Captain Boyd been willing to go around Carrizal instead of demanding that he be allowed to go directly through the town.

Major Howze, upon receipt of news of the defeat, took a force into the area to recover the loss. Captain Morey was found on the 25th, four days after the battle.

The State Department sent a sharp note demanding the release of the prisoners. This note was complied with because Carranza had been somewhat disturbed due to the fact that the entire National Guard had been called to

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15 "Battle in Mexico," Independent, 87:8, July 3, 1916.

active duty a few days before and was beginning to arrive at the border in large numbers.[16]

V. COLONIA DUBLAN

As the troops were withdrawn from the south, they were mostly gathered into one large camp at Colonia Dublan, which had been the base for the first columns chasing Villa. It became a large and crowded post with four regiments of cavalry, one of infantry, two batteries of field artillery, and engineer and quartermaster detachments, plus all the impedimenta of an army living in an only semi-permanent base.

Because of the extremes of heat and cold common to the Mexican highlands, the men were exceedingly uncomfortable. They did their best to rig up temporary structures with whatever was at hand, using their shelter-halves as the capstones of many weirdly constructed "homes." Food and clothing were, of course, abundant, which was pleasant enough in itself after the difficulties encountered in the first months in Mexico.

There were no amusement facilities except those that the men arranged for themselves. Fortunately, discipline

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[16] Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 209-213, et passim.

did not seem to suffer under these trying conditions. Christmas of 1916 was probably one of the most disappointing events of the whole period. Grandiose plans, considering the circumstances, had been made to celebrate the holiday, particularly with food. Whole steers were prepared for barbecue and put over the fires late Christmas eve. Christmas morning arrived accompanied by such a tremendous, cold norther that the dinner and all the festivities were ruined. The meat was spoiled by clouds of dust, and the wind was so bad that the men all had to seek what shelter they could find and stay there.[17]

During the six months or so which the troops spent at Colonia Dublan, training was carried on much as it might have been in the States. Because it was given in light of the experience gained in what proved to be some of the toughest campaigning that U. S. troops, especially cavalry, had ever seen, the training had a special edge to it. Tactics were revised and retaught. Techniques, which most of the troops had learned the hard way, became second nature through much practice.[18]

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17 Tompkins, op. cit., p. 214.

18 1st Lieutenant George S. Patton, "Cavalry Work of the Punitive Expedition," The Cavalry Journal, 27:423-428, January, 1917; Lt. Colonel L. J. Fleming, "The Automatic Pistol in the Punitive Expedition," The Cavalry Journal, 27: 497-499, April, 1917; Captain O. C. Troxell, "The Tenth Cavalry in Mexico," The Cavalry Journal, 28:104-110, October, 1917.

VI. EVACUATION

In January, 1917, word came at last of a settlement of sorts made by the Commissioners, who had been meeting at New London since the previous September. Tents were struck and packs were rolled on January 30. On February 5 the American troops recrossed the border into the United States at Columbus, site of the raid almost eleven months earlier, which had occasioned the expedition.[19]

Villa had meanwhile recovered from his wounds and had recruited a new army. Protected from American molestation by the Carranza forces who were between him and the Americans, Villa had even managed to take Chihuahua City temporarily, and increase his store of arms and equipment. As the Americans withdrew, Villa followed not too far behind, setting out again to take Juarez, and to attempt to establish himself as a real power in northern Mexico.[20]

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[19] Tompkins, op. cit., p. 214.

[20] "Getting Out of Mexico," Independent, 89:209-10, February 5, 1917.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NATIONAL GUARD AT THE BORDER

I. FIRST CALL

In the annual report of the War Department for 1916 General Scott stated that by the first of May,

> The entire Regular Army stationed in the United States, with the exception of a regiment of Cavalry and some of the Coast Artillery, was either distributed along the border or with General Pershing's expeditionary force.

This left the border actually in a rather precarious position. After the collapse of the negotiations at Juarez and El Paso in early May, the American representatives were sure that the Carranza government was planning some sort of an invasion of the United States along the Texas border. They recommended that the Organized Militia of three of the border states, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, be called to active duty.[1]

This met with the approval of the citizens of these states in so far as it seemed to offer protection from further border raids. In late March Senator Fall received a telegram from a prominent citizen of Douglas, Arizona,

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[1] Brigadier General Henry J. Reilly, "The National Guard on the Mexican Border," Chapter XXXV in Tompkins, op. cit., p. 282.

which begged for troops to be stationed in the town rather than six miles away, because the troops available were too far from town to prevent the Mexicans from repeating the Columbus incident in Douglas.[2] Elsewhere along the border inhabitants of isolated ranches regularly slept in the open, away from the ranch buildings, so that they would not be found if the Mexicans should decide to raid across the border. The civilians remaining at Fort Huachuca when the 10th Cavalry was sent into Mexico were all armed in order that they could repeal any Mexican invaders who might be attempting to capture American military supplies there.[3]

The War Department, by May, realized if the Mexican government attacked Pershing's troops in Mexico the remaining regular troops on the border would have to go in to support the expeditionary troops, and the border would then be left entirely unguarded. Since the Mexicans had good control over all the primary railroads of northern Mexico, they would be able, if they decided to attack, to enter the United States in force at several points where they would be entirely unopposed.[4]

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[2] Congressional Record, 64th Congress, First Session, LIII, p. 4741, March 24, 1916.

[3] Interview with Frank E. Shadley; The Bisbee (Arizona) Daily Review, January 21, 1934.

[4] Reilly, op. cit., p. 222.

Secretary of War Baker telegraphed the Governors of Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas on May 9, 1916, that:

> The President has thought proper to exercise the authority vested in him by the Constitution and laws, and call out the Organized Militia.[5]

II. SECOND CALL

The second call for the National Guard was made on June 18, six weeks after the first call. This time all the rest of the states were mobilized. According to General Scott, the reason for this call was the announcement that movement of the American forces in Mexico in any direction except north would be met by force. To forestall the possibility of war it was felt that additional troops were needed at the border immediately.[6]

It will be noted that the call in June was for the National Guard, whereas the first call in May had been for the Organized Militia. The change in title was due to the reorganization bill which had passed Congress between the two calls. The reorganization was part of the preparedness program, which was part of the administration's effort to get the country to face the increasingly dangerous

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[5] Reilly, op. cit., p. 222.

[6] Ibid., pp. 222-223.

situation in Europe.[7]

The reorganization bill did not have time to do much except change the name to National Guard and require an oath of allegiance to the Federal Government before the call was issued in June, and the Guard Units went to the border under their old state designations.[8]

The first unit to arrive on the border was the First Illinois Infantry, which detrained at San Antonio, Texas, June 30, 1916.[9] By July 4, 1916, a total of 27,160 guardsmen had reached the border. This equivalent of an entire division had assembled within sixteen days of the call from fourteen states, as far apart as Maine and California. As of July 31, there were 110,957 officers and men on the border, and 40,139 in state mobilization camps all over the country. The total number of troops called was 158,664, of which 111,954 were on the border by the end of August. All of the National Guard except 18,176,

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[7] Ibid., p. 823; Cf. also contemporary files of newspapers and magazines, and debates in Congressional Record, LIII, December, 1915-September, 1916.

[8] Interview with Otto E. Sandman. General Sandman served as a First Lieutenant on the border with Battery C, First California Field Artillery Battalion, from June to December, 1916.

[9] Captain Irving Goff McCann, With The National Guard On The Border (St. Louis: C. V. Mosby Company, 1917), p. 111.

who were excess infantry troops, was called.[10]

The guard troops were stationed in small detachments all along the border, and in four large camps at Brownsville, San Antonio, and El Paso, Texas, and at Douglas, Arizona.[11] The troops trained during all of this period as well as patrolled the border, which was the primary reason for their presence on the border.

The problem of what to do with themselves was as great for these men as for those in Mexico. They were not as accustomed to garrison life as the regular troops, and the new life was difficult for them.[12]

The guardsmen professed several reasons for not liking their service on the border, and much discontentment was expressed. They hated the weather on the border, as succeeding generations of American servicemen have likewise grown to dislike Texas as a training ground. Many of the men suffered great financial loss through absence from their regular jobs. Finally Congress passed a bill providing relief for families of the men called to Federal service, but, even so, many men returned to civilian life to find that they had lost jobs or seniority.

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[10] Reilly, op. cit., p. 228.

[11] Loc. cit.

[12] McCann, op. cit., pp. 132-174, et passim.

There were many other criticisms of the way the guard was treated by civilians on the border, by those at home, by the Regular Army, and especially by the administration. The critics of the administration were as vociferous in their condemnation of Washington's treatment of the guard as they had been of Wilson's policies generally, and the individual cases of extreme hardship gave apparent validity to their complaints.

The feeling was general among guardsmen and many others that the guard was called on in this emergency to sacrifice more than their share for the welfare and protection of the country.[13]

On January 17, 1917, General Funston was authorized to withdraw twenty-five thousand troops from border service and relieve them for discharge from active duty. On February 6, 1917, orders were given for the release of all the National Guard still on duty at the border.[14]

The general conclusions of the guard were summed up by an enlisted man of the Massachusetts National Guard

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13 Reilly, op. cit., p. 229; McCann, op. cit., pp. 174-219; Cf. also files of Independent, Outlook, Review of Reviews, etc., June, 1916-February, 1917.

14 Reilly, op. cit., p. 230.

who wrote

> . . . that it was very hot in Texas, that the National Guard could whip its weight in wildcats (according to officers of the Guard), and that as a fighting organization, it is in a class with the Boy Scouts (according to some army officers).[15]

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[15] Roger Batchelder, Watching and Waiting on The Border (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1917), p. vii.

CHAPTER IX

MILITARY RESULTS OF THE EXPEDITION

I. THE QUESTION OF SUCCESS OR FAILURE

In assessing the results of the Punitive Expedition the first question that comes to mind is whether the expedition was a success or a failure. Did the United States waste millions of dollars in sending most of the Regular Army into Mexico and mobilizing the National Guard for the purpose of avenging the Columbus raid and preventing further similar occurrences?

To pass final judgment it is necessary to know what the exact purpose of the expedition was. The public was informed in an official announcement from the White House at 1:00 P.M., March 10, 1916, the day after the Columbus raid, that:

> An adequate force will be sent at once in pursuit of Villa with the single object of capturing him and putting a stop to his forays. This can and will be done in entirely friendly aid of the constituted authorities in Mexico and with scrupulous respect for the sovereignty of that republic.[1]

Secretary Baker's order to General Funston, commanding officer of the Southern Department ran like this:

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[1] New York Times, March 11, 1916.

> You will promptly organize an adequate military force of troops from your department under the command of Brigadier General John J. Pershing. . . . Those troops will be withdrawn to American territory as soon as the de facto government of Mexico is able to relieve them of this work. In any event the work of these troops will be regarded as finished as soon as Villa's band or bands are broken up.[2]

A telegram from War Department Headquarters to General Pershing, dated March 13, 1916, stated:

> The President desires that your attention is especially and earnestly called to his determination that the expedition into Mexico is limited to the purposes originally stated, namely the pursuit and dispersion of the band or bands that attacked Columbus, N. M.[3]

From the above three quotations it is a simple matter to determine that, regardless of what the public thought or what they were told about the idea of capturing or killing Villa, the real purpose was to disperse the Villa bands, as ordered by the Commander in Chief, and as understood by Pershing and his subordinate commanders, so that the raid could not be repeated.

The purpose having been established, the question arises as to whether or not General Pershing succeeded in his task of dispensing the bandit groups, so that they could not repeat their offense. The apologists for

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[2] Toulmin, op. cit., p. 6.

[3] Tompkins, op. cit., p. 218.

Pershing, and the opponents of Wilson, both maintained that the expedition accomplished its purpose as far as it could, and was prevented from complete success because of Wilson's weak policy toward Carranza.[4]

Let us review what the expedition actually accomplished. Large bands of Villistas were battled and broken up at Guerrero, Tomochic, and Ojos Azules. The following leaders of Villa's bands were either captured or killed during the eleven months the troops were in Mexico: Hernandez, Gutierrez, Lopez, Silva, Beltran, Cervantes, and Cardenas. Villa was left with only Angeles as a reliable officer.[5]

Villa himself eluded capture, once by luck at Guerrero, and several times with the apparent connivance of the Carranza forces, who stalled the Americans to keep them from catching up with Villa or failed to pass on information they had as to his whereabouts.

Apparently then, Pershing succeeded in carrying out the orders which commanded him to break up the band that had attacked Columbus. Villa attempted to revive his failing fortunes and followed behind the American troops occupying

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[4] Ibid., p. 72; McCann, op. cit., pp. 39-51, et passim.

[5] Tompkins, op. cit., p. 219.

towns as they withdrew in February, 1917. When he finally felt strong enough to attack Juarez in 1919, the Carranza forces were strong enough to keep him away from the border.[6]

Of course, the whole question became political long before the troops were withdrawn, and there were few people who did not take sides on Wilson's Mexican policy and its apparently inconclusive results. But militarily speaking, it seems to the writer that the American Punitive Expedition was a success, and achieved remarkable results under the adverse conditions which the Mexican countryside and the political involvements imposed on them.

General Pershing's commendation of his troops was justly deserved.

> The splendid services that the regular troops comprising this Expedition have performed under most adverse conditions, again proves that for natural ability, physical endurance, unflinching persistence, general efficiency, and unquestioned loyalty and devotion to duty, the well trained officers and men of the regular army are unexcelled by the troops of any other nation.[7]

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[6] Edgcumb, Pinchon, Viva Villa! (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1933), pp. 348-349.

[7] Tompkins, op. cit., p. 220.

II. EFFECT ON WORLD WAR I PERFORMANCE

In general the Punitive Expedition had a beneficial effect on the military status of the country. It contributed greatly to an aroused interest in military matters among the general public, and gave a helpful impetus to Wilson's preparedness program. It gave additional experience in the field to the units of the Regular Army, which were shunted about the country to meet the need for troops to chase Villa.

Specifically, it made possible a testing under field conditions of two new forms of military activity which had never before been used by the United States Army. These were the fledgling air force and the system of motor transport.

Air Force. The First Aero Squadron of the Signal Corps was the first organization of its kind ever used in active field service in the history of the United States Army. During the course of the expedition the squadron discovered what kinds of planes were satisfactory for courier and reconnaisance duty, although they did not test any of the machines in actual combat. A beginning was made also in aerial photography.

Captain Foulois, commander of the squadron, on the

basis of his experience on the border and in Mexico, recommended a whole procedure for organization and administration of aerial units, and in particular insisted that all types of airplanes be tested under the most rigorous conditions before being accepted for use by the army. He also felt that the service in the field had given great impetus to the development of an efficient aviation service for the United States Army.[8]

Motor Transport. Captain Pope, commander of the First Truck Company, which operated on the so-called road from Columbus to Nemiquipa, made a report on the use of trucks during the expedition. Problems of personnel were of the greatest magnitude. Mechanics and drivers were a new category in the army, and during the time of the expedition problems of grade and authority were ironed out, and, as in the Aero Squadron, the best methods of organization and administration were developed.[9] Captain Pope summed up the contribution of the motor transport sections of the expedition as follows:

> The Mexican Punitive Expedition was the first opportunity given the United States Army to handle motor transportation on a reasonably large scale, and

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[8] Foulois, op. cit., pp. 236-245, et passim.

[9] Pope, op. cit., pp. 246-254, et passim.

> the experience so gained, although confined to comparatively few officers, was of inestimable value in the World War.[10]

National Guard. The National Guard probably benefited more than any other branch or arm of the military. General Sandman informed the writer that, without a doubt, the National Guard could never have done the job it did in the World War without the training and experience received during the border service in 1916.[11] The border service of the guard also demonstrated that the country had need of a somewhat larger Regular Army than it had maintained previously. Because it was unfair to the guard to serve a prolonged period when an actual national emergency did not exist, it showed the need for some sort of selective service as a more reasonable way to increase the size of the armed forces of the United States.[12]

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[10] Ibid., p. 246.

[11] Interview with Otto E. Sandman.

[12] Reilly, op. cit., p. 229.

CHAPTER X

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS 1916-1917

I. NEGOTIATIONS CONCERNING ENTRY

It is possible to demonstrate that the attitude of the Mexican people and the Carranza government toward Pershing's expedition was justifiably one of hostility. Although the United States claimed that it entered Mexico as a result of an agreement on reciprocal rights of pursuit, in reality such was not the case, and the United States merely assumed the right by apparently intentionally misreading Carranza's answers to its questions.

On March 9, 1916, the State Department directed their Special Agents, Belt and Silliman, to inform Carranza of the attack on Columbus. This was done, and Belt replied that the Carranza government had already been apprised of the raid. He said in his telegram to the State Department on the 10th that he was asking for information as to why nothing had been done about Villa before, and what the First Chief's government intended to do about the punishment of Villa.[1]

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[1] Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States--1916 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1925), p. 481.

Carranza's answer to these questions and the State Department's reply are worth quoting in full to show how both governments proceeded by ignoring what the other was saying.

Irapuato, March 10, 1916, 11:00 P.M.

In reply to your courteous note of yesterday, forwarded by Mr. John W. Belt, I have the honor to inform you that in making the said note known to the citizen First Chief of the Constitutionalist Army in charge of the Executive Power of the Nation, he directed me to say to you, who will have the kindness to repeat it to the Department of State of the Government of the United States, that:

The First Chief is painted to hear of the lamentable occurrence at Columbus, New Mexico, on the occasion of the attack upon it yesterday by bandits led by Francisco Villa.

Although there has been in the State of Chihuahua a sufficient force to restore order and afford guarantees to nationals and foreigners, since Francisco Villa began operations in the mountains of that State, the Chief Executive, at the request of the Governor of Chihuahua and of the Consul at El Paso, ordered 2500 men under command of General Luis Gutierrez to pursue the bandits who have just crossed into the territory of the United States, who made this move doubtless because they were driven to it by the persistent pursuit conducted by the said command of General Gutierrez.

The deplorable incident above mentioned bears some resemblance to the raids into the States of Sonora and Chihuahua by Indians from the reservations of the Government of the United States. The Sonora raid took place about the year 1880 when the Indian Geronimo with a large horde invaded a community in the northern part of Sonora, and committed a number of murders and depredations, taking the lives and property of Mexican families until, after a long and persistent pursuit by Mexican and American forces, the band was annihilated and the chief captured. The invasion of Chihuahua by

the Indian Victor followed by 800 Indians took place from 1884 to 1886. At that time the bands went as far as the towns of Tejolochic and Tres Castillos, very near the capital of Chihuahua, committing many crimes. At their first real battle with the Mexican forces they lost their chief and scattered.

In both these cases an agreement between the Governments of the United States and Mexico provided that armed forces of either country might freely cross into the territory of the other to pursue and chastize those bandits.

Bearing in mind these precedents and the happy results to both countries yielded by the agreement above referred to, the Government over which the citizen First Chief presides, desiring to exterminate as soon as possible the horde led by Francisco Villa, who was recently outlawed, and to capture Villa and to adequately punish him, applies through you, Mr. Confidential Agent, to the Government of the United States and asks that the Mexican forces be permitted to cross into American territory in pursuit of the aforesaid bandits led by Villa, upon the understanding that reciprocally, the forces of the United States may cross into Mexican territory, if the raid effected at Columbus should unfortunately be repeated at any other point on the border.

The Government of Mexico would highly appreciate a prompt and favorable decision by the Goernment of the United States.

Accepted, etc.

Acuna,
In charge of the Department of Foreign Relations.
Silliman[2]

The State Department replied to this amazing message as follows:

Department of State,
Washington, March 13, 1916, 3:00 P.M.

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[2] Foreign Relations--1916, p. 485.

Your March 10, midnight. You are instructed to reply as follows to Secretary Acuna's note of March 10:

The Government of the United States has received the courteous note of Senior Acuna and has read with satisfaction his suggestion for reciprocal privileges to the American and Mexican authorities in the pursuit and apprehension of outlaws who infest their respective territories lying along the international boundary, and who are a constant menace to the lives and the property of the residents of that region.

The Government of the United States, in view of the unusual state of affairs which has existed for some time along the international boundary and earnestly desiring to cooperate with the de facto Government of Mexico to suppress this state of lawlessness, of which the attack on Columbus, N. M. is a deplorable example, and to insure peace and order in the regions contiguous to the boundary between the two Republics, readily grants permission for the military forces of the de facto Government of Mexico to cross the international boundary in pursuit of lawless bands of armed men who have entered Mexico from the United States, committed outrages on Mexican soil, and fled into the United States, on the understanding that the de facto Government of Mexico grants the reciprocal privilege that the forces of the United States may pursue across the international boundary into Mexican territory lawless bands of armed men who have entered the United States from Mexico, committed outrages on American soil, and fled into Mexico.

The Government of the United States understands that in view of its agreement to this reciprocal arrangement proposed by the de facto Government the arrangement is now complete and in force and the reciprocal privileges thereunder may accordingly be exercised by either Government without further interchange of views.

It is a matter of sincere gratification to the Government of the United States that the de facto Government of Mexico has evinced so cordial and friendly a spirit of cooperation in the efforts of the authorities of the United States to apprehend and punish the bands of outlaws who seek refuge in the erroneous belief that the constituted authorities will resent any pursuit across the boundary by the forces of the

Government whose citizens have suffered by the crimes of the fugitives.

With the same spirit of cordial friendship the Government of the United States will exercise the privilege granted by the de facto Government of Mexico in the hope and confident expectation that by their mutual efforts lawlessness will be eradicated and peace and order maintained in the United States and Mexico contiguous to the international boundary.

Sent in duplicate to you and Belt.

Lansing.[3]

It will be seen that the Mexicans referred to future border difficulties, and that the United States then announced that it would move now on the basis of that assurance. When they asked what the Mexican attitude would be, Belt and Silliman were told at first that the sending of Americans into Mexico for the purpose of pursuing and capturing Villa would be approved by Carranza's government.[4]

The official reply was different. The Mexican Confidential Agent in Washington delivered to the Secretary of State a note to the effect that Mexico had not agreed to any entry of American troops, which was quite true, as the above telegrams show, and that Mexico would not allow the use of its national railroads by the United States forces.

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[3] Foreign Relations--1916, pp. 487, 488.

[4] Foreign Relations--1916, p. 491.

However, they did not indicate that they would meet the American troops with force.[5]

II. EARLY ATTEMPTS AT SETTLEMENT

The Mexican government continued to consistently deny the right of the American troops to be in Mexico, and refused to allow them the use of the national railways. However, most of the objections, though certainly the moral right was with the Mexicans, were due to the fact that Carranza feared the wrath of the people should he cooperate willingly with the Americans. The Mexican Secretary of Treasury was directed by Carranza to confer with special Representative Rodgers and tell him that "General Carranza, while [in] sympathy with purpose, believes it would be better to withhold for the present open consent. . ." The government suggested that civilian consignees be designated to receive army supplies, and then the Carranza forces would order delivery quickly.[6]

Negotiations continued in this vein, with the Mexicans officially denying the right of American forces to be in Mexico, and officially refusing to let the Americans use the

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[5] Ibid., p. 493.

[6] Foreign Relations--1916, pp. 502-503.

railroads until the fight at Parral on April 12.[7]

The Mexican government immediately intimated to the State Department that Pershing's force must be withdrawn at once.[8] Consul Letcher reported from Chihuahua City on April 21 that he could no longer assure the passage of supplies in any manner by rail.[9] The military reported that they could no longer maintain wire communication either by Mexican telegraph, which was reported out of order to prevent use, or by their own field wire, which was cut if it was not guarded constantly.[10]

On April 22 Secretary Lansing suggested that a conference be held at El Paso between General Obregon and General Scott to "prevent misunderstandings and make possible real cooperation between the forces of the two governments." Carranza agreed, and General Obregon was sent to Juarez, where he arrived on the 28th, and the meetings began on the 29th.[11]

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[7] Ibid., pp. 504-513.

[8] Ibid., pp. 513-525.

[9] Ibid., p. 527.

[10] Ibid., pp. 526-527.

[11] Foreign Relations--1916, pp. 527-533.

Generals Scott and Funston were the American representatives, and they were directed to press for the cooperation of the de facto government in military affairs so that Villa might be captured quickly and the American forces withdrawn.[12] Obregon, however, had been instructed to discuss only the withdrawal of American troops on the grounds that Villa's band had been dispersed, and that if Villa was still alive, which Obregon maintained he doubted, he was unable to do any further damage.[13]

The State Department suggested that American troops would withdraw to any designated point until some plan could be worked out to restore order.[14] However, Obregon replied "that one miles or five hundred across the border was the same thing so far as it affected the sovereignty of Mexico."[15] Finally, the three generals privately reached an agreement, but when Carranza was informed of the plan he would not sign it. On May 8 Scott and Funston reported that they felt the Mexican representatives were acting in bad faith, and that, even if the agreement were ratified,

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[12] Ibid., pp. 530-532.

[13] Ibid., p. 534.

[14] Ibid., p. 534.

[15] Ibid., p. 535.

the Mexicans would not be able to carry it out in their own country.[16]

The conference fell apart after this, and Obregon returned to Mexico City. The generals, fearing strong resistance by the Mexicans, recommended that the National Guard of three of the border states be called out.[17] This recommendation was acted upon just as the conference ended.[18]

III. CARRIZAL AND ITS RESULTS

On May 22 Carranza sent to the United States an ill-tempered message stating that the expedition was "an invasion without Mexico's consent, withouts its knowledge, and without the cooperation of its authorities." He demanded an immediate withdrawal of the American troops on the basis that the avowed purpose of the expedition--to disperse Villa's band--had been achieved, as General Scott had stated in the conference held in Juarez.[19]

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16 Foreign Relations--1916, pp. 538-539, 543-544.

17 Ibid., p. 544.

18 Tompkins, op. cit., p. 198.

19 Foreign Relations--1916, pp. 552-563.

After continued threats of action on the part of the Carranza government, and a small horse stealing raid above Laredo, the State Department on June 20 replied to Carranza's message of May 22. The American government refused to withdraw the expedition, stating:

> In view of this increasing menace, of the inactivity of Carranza forces, of the lack of cooperation in the apprehension of the Villa bands, and of the known encouragement and aid given to bandit leaders, it is unreasonable to expect the United States to withdraw its forces from Mexican territory or to prevent their entry when their presence is the only check upon further bandit outrages and the only efficient means of protecting American lives and homes--safeguards which General Carranza, though internationally obligated to supply, is manifestly unable or unwilling to give.[20]

The next day the battle at Carrizal occurred, and the greatest crisis of the entire period ensued. The country was greatly aroused and action was demanded. Wilson demanded the release of the American prisoners, and he and Secretary of War Baker prepared a war message for Congress.[21] The entire National Guard was called up. It seemed that the extreme interventionists might have their day at last. Carranza hesitated before complying with the demands of the State Department, but the labor leaders of the two countries, under the leadership of Samuel Gompers,

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[20] Ibid., pp. 580-592.

[21] Baker, op. cit., Vol. 5, pp. 75-79.

requested the release, and Carranza finally agreed. Mediation was again offered by several Latin American nations, and Wilson was more than eager to find some way to avoid open hostilities with Mexico. A joint commission, consisting of three representatives from each nation, was set up to find a peaceful way out of the delicate situation.[22]

The commission met on September 6, 1916, and continued its sessions into 1917. During the fall of 1916 the President campaigned for re-election, and though the Republicans roundly denounced Wilson's Mexican policy, the fact remained that the United States had not gotten involved in a useless and hindering war regardless of the great provocation.[23]

In January, 1917, the United States finally agreed to withdraw its troops. After the long negotiations the American commissioners were still convinced that the Carranza government was unable and unwilling to settle the difficulties, but they came to the conclusion that keeping the American forces in Mexico would be worse than removing them. The final agreement was that the United States would

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[22] Robinson and West, op. cit., pp. 106-107; Rippy, op. cit., pp. 357-358; Baker, op. cit., Vol. 5, pp. 79-81.

[23] Baker, op. cit., Vol. 5, p. 80.

withdraw its troops to the border, patrol it, and hold Mexico responsible for any further troubles.[24]

IV. EVALUATION

With the advent of American participation in the war, Mexico and its problems receded into the background of American diplomacy. The expedition had completed its service. If force was to be used again it was not thought of in terms of merely an expedition.[25]

There were varying views as to the effectiveness and intelligence of Wilson's policy in dealing with Mexico. Examples of several are worth noting.

Colonel Tompkins, author of an account of the expedition, and a member of it, expresses himself in disapproval:

> In all Mr. Wilson's dealings with Carranza the 'First Chief' dominated the situation. To quote a few examples: When Mr. Wilson asked Carranza to attend the Conference of Niagara Falls, the latter refused, with which our President conformed. When Wilson opposed the demand of Carranza for the unconditional surrender of Carvajal, Wilson finally yielded. When Carranza was invited by Wilson to celebrate peace with the Villa faction, Carranza answered that it was not the business of Wilson to meddle in the contests of Mexicans, to which Mr. Wilson had nothing to reply. When the American Government associated with six complacent

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[24] Baker, op. cit., Vol. 5, pp. 81-82.

[25] Rippy, op. cit., p. 358.

> Latin-American Governments, invited the warring factions to a conference of peace, Carranza was the only one who rejected the invitation, demanding, in exchange, that he be recognized, which was quickly done. Although President Wilson had announced himself as 'the champion of constitutional government on this continent' and declared that he would not have as a government in Mexico one which should not be regulated by the constitution of the country, he nevertheless recognized the dictator Carranza. When the Punitive Expedition took place, Carranza prohibited the American forces from using the Mexican railroads and from entering the towns and villages, to all of which Mr. Wilson acceeded with meekness. When Carranza forbade the troops of General Pershing to move in any direction but north, Mr. Wilson obeyed. And finally, when Mr. Wilson had menaced with 'The gravest consequences' any act of violence against the Punitive Expedition, Carranza troops destroyed an American column at Carrizal, and the 'gravest consequences' of this act were the invitation to the conferences at New London.[26]

This expresses generally what the milder opponents to Wilson's Mexican policy thought. The real extremists, like Senator Fall, shouted about the tyranny of Carranza and the spilled blood of American citizens, and similar super-patriotic nonsense, in order to cover their desire for Mexico's raw materials, which was the motivation for their desire for intervention.[27]

Professor Bemis summarizes the episode as follows:

> Woodrow Wilson's Mexican policy, based on his principle of not recognizing an usurper's overthrow of constitutional government, can hardly be called an

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[26] Tompkins, op. cit., p. 219.

[27] Rippy, op. cit., p. 357.

> unqualified success. He intervened diplomatically to save the Mexican people from a new dictator. This novel action, the product of idealism and inexperience, involved him against his will in limited military interventions, and it very nearly brought the United States into an unnecessary war with Mexico at an extraordinarily critical moment of its history. He opened full wide the sluiceways of a revolution that distressed and ravaged the people beyond measure. Hundreds of American citizens lost their lives in the ensuing violence. Most of the survivors left the country, abandoning their homes and property. In subsequent decades, hundreds of millions of legitimately invested American capital was lost. Destruction of property of the Mexican cientificos naturally turned against the United States the survivors of that elite, the most intelligent and able fraction of the population. The interventions in the port of Vera Cruz and the northern states alienated the remainder. For a long time afterward neither the suffering people of Mexico nor their successive governments were sincere friends of the United States.[28]

Still another view, which takes into account the far-seeing qualities of Wilson as a statesman, is given by Professor Rippy:

> Finaly judgment can no more be passed upon the Mexican policy of Wilson than upon that of Taft. . . . His /Wilson's/ opposition probably hastened the overthrow of Huerta, but the overthrow was probably destined to be accomplished sooner or later anyway. The submerged masses could not long have been held in check. In opposing Huerta Wilson was attempting to hasten the process of democratization and nationalization and in backing Carranza he was working toward the same end. Whether he succeeded in his effort it is difficult to say. Possibly he chose the wrong man. At the time he picked Carranza both Obregon and Calles were in sight, but there is no absolute assurance that they would permanently have succeeded where Carranza failed. If they had been

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[28] Samuel Flagg Bemis, The Latin American Policy of the United States (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1943), pp. 183-184.

> backed then their bones might now be lying where the remains of Carranza were placed to rest and Carranza might now be the champion of 'Mexico for the Mexicans' and land for the masses. The only difference between the intervention of Wilson and the armed intervention of the aggressives is largely one of purpose and cost. Wilson looked toward a regime which respected two important sentiments of the age--nationalism and democracy--and his policy was comparatively inexpensive. The apostles of armed intervention would have acted in the interest of an imperialism which had little respect for either, and the bill of blood and money would have been presented to the American public at large. There would probably have been little difference in the length of time required for the final consummation. Those who are more tolerant and passive may criticize both Wilson and the aggressives upon essentially the same ground. Both were too impatient to permit Mexico to work out her own destiny by dint of her own efforts and without interference of any kind.[29]

This writer takes the view that Professor Rippy is probably closer to the truth than Colonel Tompkins or Professor Bemis. Colonel Tompkin's views are, of course, those of a military man and of one who definitely did not like Wilson or most of the ideals for which he stood. They do speak for the opinion of a large number of people, but as Rippy points out, any kind of effective intervention would have proven far more costly, and would not necessarily have been of more value in the long run.

Professor Bemis objects to Wilson's policies on the ground that they caused a great loss of property and of

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[29] Rippy, op. cit., pp. 363-364.

American life, and "opened full wide the sluiceways of a revolution that distressed and ravaged the people beyond measure." The writer maintains that the continued course of revolution was inevitable, and any stronger action which the United States might have taken could only have postponed and not prevented the revolution from completing its temporarily disastrous course.

Actually the Punitive Expedition did not make much of a change in the relations between the United States and Mexico. Relations were strained long before the expedition took place, and during the time the American troops were in Mexico both governments were in awkward positions. None of the authorities on diplomatic history deal with the legal standing of the expedition. This writer supposes that initially some case could be made for "hot pursuit." But "hot pursuit" begins to sound rather weak after a number of months, especially after General Scott agreed in early May to the statement that the Villa bands had been dispersed,[30] the original purpose having been that very dispersal according to Wilson. Of course, the Mexicans were in just as difficult a position for having allowed anything like the Columbus raid to have occurred in the

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[30] Foreign Relations--1916, p. 538.

first place.

In the long run the expedition did redound to the credit of the United States, even though within its own context it was not especially successful. As Bemis points out, the way in which Wilson handled the situation, without taking undue advantage of the position and strength of the United States, impressed the rest of the Latin American nations with his sincerity, and made possible their trust during World War I.

The writer would like to conclude with a quotation from Ray Stannard Baker's Woodrow Wilson:

> It is not too much to say that if it had not been for Woodrow Wilson's determination that the American nation should act always toward Mexico upon a plane of honour, tolerance, helpfulness, patience, consonant with our power and responsibility, we should certainly have been at war: and good relations with the rising nations to the south of us which have been developing so hopefully since that time might have been long delayed.[31]

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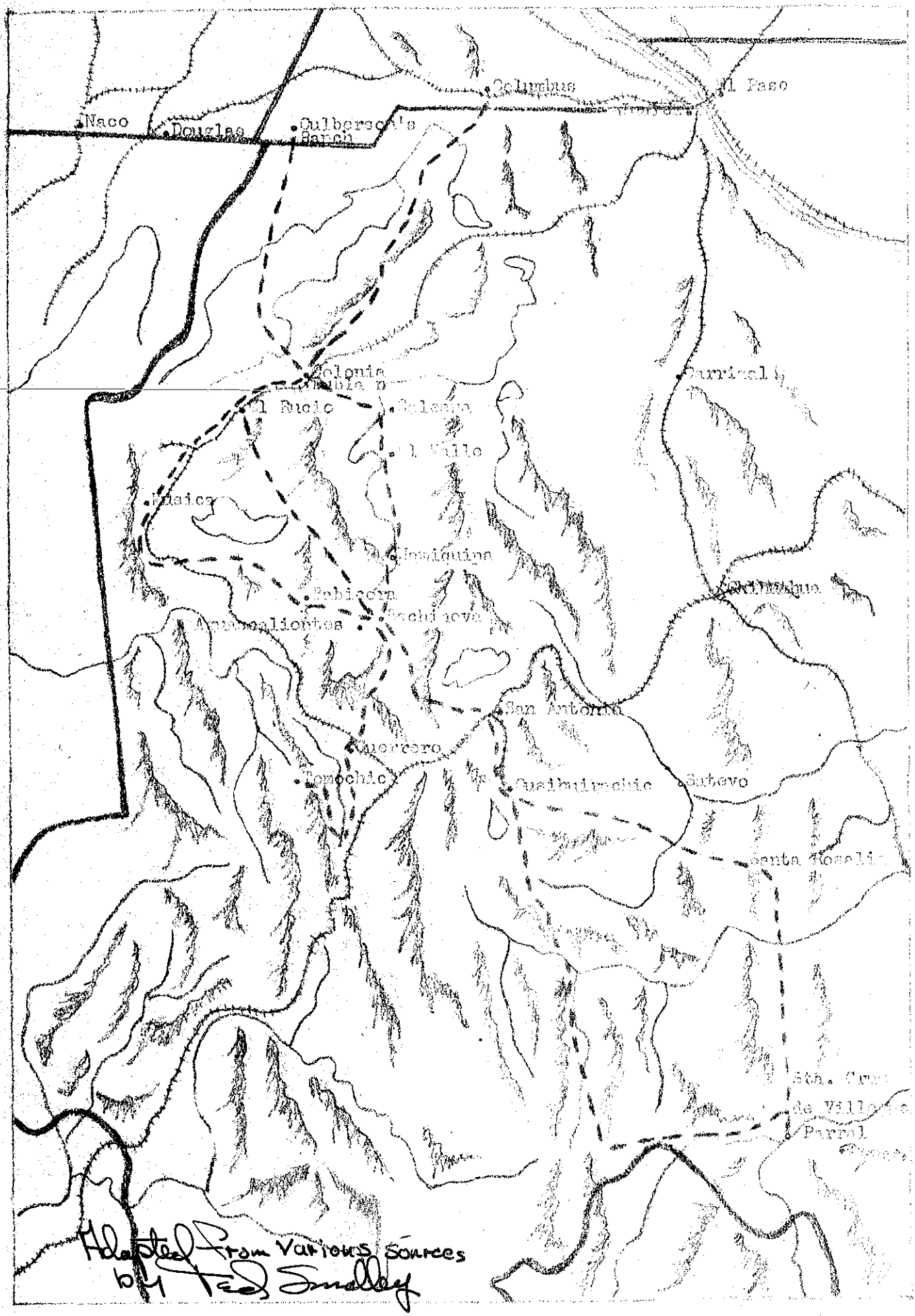
[31] Baker, op. cit., Vol. 5, p. 82.


Columbus
El Paso
Naco
Douglas
Colonia
El Rucio
Jiménez
Parral
Adapted from Various Sources
by Ted Smalley

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